A

DIALOGUE,

Concerning

The Practicall uſe

OF

INFANT-BAPTISME:

PENNED,

And Publiſhed for a profitable Diverſion from the hot and eager Diſputes of this Age concerning the lawfulneſs, to an holy improvement of the grounds, and practice thereof.

AS ALSO,

For the ſatisfaction of thoſe who lay it aſide altogether, or practiſe it coldly, and ſleightly, becauſe they know not of what advantage it is to a Chriſtian practice.

Whereunto is added A 2d DIALOGUE on the ſame ſubject.

By *Simon Ford*, B. D. and Miniſter to the Congregation at *Laurence* Church in *READING*.

LONDON.
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VIRO

Generis nobilitate, vera pietate,

ET

Rerum gestarum celebritate,
admodùm Insigni,

GUILIELMO WALLER
EQUITI;

NEC NON

ANNÆ,
Nobilissimæ (juxta) & pientissimæ
CONJUGI;

DUPLICEM HUNC

De usu Pœdo-Baptismi *Tractatulum,*

ET

Annexam Conciunculam,

In perpetuæ gratitudinis Testimonium,
& observantiæ Tesseram.

D. D.

SIMON FORE

TO

The Reverend, and Learned, Mr. *Stephen Marſhall*, Mr. *Richard Baxter*, Mr. *Thomas Blake*, Mr. *Thomas Cobbet*, and other the ſurviving Patrons of the antiently Orthodox, and eminently-uſefull Doctrine, and practiſe of *Infant-Baptiſm*.

Reverend and learned Fathers, *and* Bretheren.

I Have for ſome late years (to my great grief) found the experience of this Truth, [*That vulgar hearers, and readers of controverſies in Religion, are like Larks, and other Birds in a dark night, which are ſo amazed with the light, and the lou-bell, that they ſit ſtill hearkning and gazing; till the*

net be caſt over them;] And it is the policy of Satan, who makes it his deſign to catch Souls, to keep up thoſe publick conteſts for this very purpoſe, that ſo he may (eſpecially in this dark night of Church-confuſion, wherein we are) puzzle, and confound the minds of ordinary Chriſtians, and hold them in ſuſpence, as to the practiſe of thoſe things, which he knows moſt eminently uſeful to the promoting of *practical godlineſs*, till he take them unawares in ſome net or other; for he is not to learn that it is a conſiderable advantage to his main deſign, (*the overthrowing of their faith, and undoing their ſouls*) if he can but hinder them for ſome time from the uſe of thoſe means, which he knows are ſo great enemies to his Kingdom.

Thence it is, that the hotteſt diſputes of this Age (which for *practical godlineſs* was once likely to have gotten the ſtart of any that went before it, ſince the *firſt primitive* dayes) the hotteſt and moſt eager diſputes have been about, or againſt *Ordinances*, the conſtant and ſtanding exerciſes *thereof*, and the *ſtaple commodity* from which the livelyhood, and ſubſiſtence *thereof* is maintained. You cannot but ſee as well, and better then I, that when an Ordinance comes to be *diſputed* either *Thetically*, or *Hypothetically*, it is commonly *neglected* or ſleightly attented, by the generality of people; and lies between them like a *controverted eſtate*, concerning which ſome thing is done to maintain the *ſuite*, but little to manure, and improve the *Land*. Men think it a ſufficient plea for their ſinfull neglects in ſuch caſes, *That it is a diſputable*

table thing, and till all be agreed upon the point, they hope they may be allowed to ſit ſtill and look on, and then engage when they ſee what ſide will prevaile. Thus diſputes about the *Miniſtery*, have made the *wayes of Zion mourn*, for the fewneſs of thoſe that come to the *ſolemn Aſſemblies*: the conteſts about the *Sabbath*, have turned it (in the eſteem of moſt people) to a meer *idle day*, wherein the State gives them liberty to ſhut up ſhops, and ſit by the *fire*, or tipple in the *Alehouſe*, or walk in the *fields*: ſo concerning *ſinging* of *Pſalmes*, and the *Sacrament of the Lords Supper*, you know better then I can tell you, how many ſinfully ſuſpend their practiſe upon occaſion of the controverſies raiſed concerning them. Another miſchiefe I obſerve in theſe times of diſpute is, that among thoſe that by occaſion of the controverſies are any time conſcientiouſly puzzled, it is apparently ſeen, that they know no *medium* betweene *hæſitation*, or ſcrupling about an Ordinance, (though but in a circumſtance) and the *renouncing* it altogether; ſo that the very beginning of their *ſcruples*, is a *ſuperſedeas* to their *practiſe*.

This is (generally) the caſe of the *Ordinance of Baptiſme*. The late unhappy diſputes about it, have (*wo be to them by whom* that *offence cometh*) made men of ordinary capacities, either to look upon it as a litigious thing, and ſo *lay it aſide* altogether, as the *Seekers* and *Familiſts*; or to *practiſe* it as a *matter of indifferency*, without that due reſpect to it, which belongs to an Ordinance of God, as moſt *moral* and *ignorant*

people do; or else lastly, (at least for some time) to *suspend the practise of it*, as abundance of *unsetled hearers* in every part of the Land.

As for the *Infant application* of it, I perswade my self that the *little use* of it which hath been generally known, hath bin a main motive to divers to renounce it altogether, and to others (through the just judgment of God) to blaspheme it. People have had it commonly buzzed in their ears; that seeing the *Infant Subjects of that administration*, are incapable of understanding it, and making present actual improvement of it, there is little reason to retain the practise of that, which seems so barren, and unprofitable.

But *holy men*, who have made it their study to dive into *the nature and use of all Ordinances*, and to work upon their owne hearts by them, have (for many ages no doubt) drawn abundance of sanctifying influence from it, and the *principles* and *grounds* upon which it hath been administred; and those of *this Age*, who have had the holy wisdom to turn matters of *dispute* into *practice*; have been able to say, by their experience, (in a manner) as the man that was *born blind*, in the dispute between him and the Pharisees, *Joh.* 9. concerning Christ, *It is a marvellous thing that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes*, verse. 30. So they wonder, that ever it should enter into a dispute, *Whether Infant-Baptisme be of God, or no?* seeing it hath been (by the sanctifying influence of the *Spirit* of God) a conduit of abundance of gracious supplies to them,

them, for which they have had cauſe to bleſs God the longeſt day of their lives. And the very experience of this, (had your ſelves, and ſuch as you (learned and laborious ſearchers of the Scripture, and thoſe to whom this controverſie owes much for your endeavor therein) ſaid leſſe for it then you have) is no ſmall encouragement to them to own and value it; ſeeing it cannot eaſily enter into their hearts, that God ſhould convey *ſanctifying influences*, for ſo many years, by a *miſtaken and miſapplyed Ordinance*, eſpecially when the main efficacy of that Ordinance, in order to the mentioned effects, depends upon *that* very *circumſtance of age* wherein it is charged to be *miſapplyed*: For though it may (in ſome caſes) be granted, [*That an Ordinance adminiſtred with ſome conſiderable circumſtantial irregularities, may ſanctifie*;] yet that thoſe *irregularities themſelves*, ſhould be the *channels of ſanctifying Grace*, is not eaſily imaginable. Now this is the caſe of *Infant-baptiſme*. Many holy men, of many Ages, have found their hearts warmed, and quickened in the exerciſe of *Faith*, *Repentance*, *Love*, *Thankfulneſs*, reſtrained from *ſin*, excited to *duty*, by the conſideration (not only of *Baptiſm* and the perſonal Covenant therein ſealed, but alſo) of *Baptiſme* under the circumſtance of *Infant adminiſtration*, and the *Covenant of Anceſtors*, the foundation of that Adminiſtration. Nay more, how often hath Gods engagement in *Infant-Baptiſm*, and the *hereditary Covenant of believers*, been *pleaded* (with ſucceſs) and *ſpread before the Lord*, by

godly

godly Persons, Ministers, Parents, and others, on the behalf of themselves and theirs; which prayers (surely) seeing they were assisted in them by the Holy Spirit, and eminently answered by God, it is hard to imagine, that they should be founded in a lye? And indeed, that the *Spirit of Truth* should dictate, *and* the *God of Truth* answer those prayers, which are offered up on so grossely mistaken grounds as those of *willworship*, (the crime generally charged upon *Infant-Baptism*) seems most absurd, and (in my judgement) approacheth somewhat neere to *blasphemy*. For the truth of this, (as to matter of experience) I make no question, but thousands of steady Christians can second mine owne (who am the weakest of many of my Brethren, both Ministers and other Christians) and therefore I doubt not, but *that* will keep them up-right in the present controversie, though the *Scriptures*, upon which their practise is grounded, should be a thousand times more *perplexed*, and *entangled* by the sophistry of their Adversaries.

In the mean time, (however) they cannot but take it wery ill, that the wayes in which they have, and do dayly, find so much of God, should be (not only *disputed*, but) *railed down*, by men, who pretend to so much *Christian moderation*, as some of the Antagonists do. That I mention not the *sooty* and *smutty* names of *Blackwood* and *Collyer*, and others, who have very much gone beyond their fellows in this way; divers sober men do not take it for any very good evidence of that full satisfaction which

which Mr. *Tombes* pretends to give in his last *Review* of your writings, that he casts so much of this dirt in the faces of those men, and that practice, which surely, will shew their faces in an humble *Appeale* to the Lord Jesus, the King of the Church and Lord of all Ordinances, as farre forth, as he, or those of his way; yea, or as his way it self, dare do. I give you here a *Catalogue* of some straynes of his language in this kinde, gathered out of that *Review*, wherein yet there is a great deal more. *Infant-watering* p. 50. *the superstitious opinion and prophane practise of Infant-Baptism, or rather (as it is now used) sprinkling and perfusion*, pag. 104. *Who make Infants Disciples by an imaginary covenant, and their parents profession*, pag. 150. *In common speech (arising from the fond conceit, as if Baby-sprinkling made them Christians) Infants are called Christians. And our Infants are the children of Christians, yet not themselves (christians, till they believe in Christ*, pag. 205. *Baby-Baptism*, pag. 214. *Prophane Infant-sprinkling*, pag 240. *So gross an abuse as Infant-Baptism is*, pag 245. *That which is called by Pœdo-Baptists in their nonsense or proper gibberish*, the outward Covenant, pag. 253. *They rashly and prophanely Baptize them that they have no knowledge of, that of them is the Kingdom of glory*, pag. 264. *Wrangling Baby-sprinklers*, pag. 276.

To all which I may adde that heavy *censure*, which he passeth, with a full mouth; upon Pœdo-Baptists, Ministers, and People; that they are all guilty of *injudiciousness, or sloathfulness*

fulneſs in ſearching after the Truth, or preju-dice, or adhering to mens ſayings out of reverence to their perſons, or function, or ſome ſuch like evil quality. And this he paſſeth, not upon the profaner and looſer ſort, but *even thoſe of them who are of tender conſciences.* Had Mr. *Tombes* his *conſcience* been a little more *tender* in this, and the reſt of his high rauntings againſt the Perſons, and Doctrine of his Adverſaries in this point, it had been nothing to the diſparagement of his perſon or cauſe. *Reproaches*, and *cenſures* may well be forborn, on the ſide of *Truth*, which needs not *tali auxilio vel defenſoribus iſtis.*

I hope Mr. *Tombes* will not take it ill, that I have minded him of thoſe *out-leaps* of his Pen, nor interpret it a *deſigne to poſſeſſe people againſt him*; and *an indirect taking of advantages* to that purpoſe (as he doth unjuſtly charge me in his firſt Section of the ſaid Booke, upon occaſion of my publication of his coming off at the *Act at Oxford* 1652. in his declining a Diſ-pute between himſelfe, and others, who upon a publique vapour of his in the *Divinity-School* (which afterwards he recalled at the *Deane of Chriſt-Church* his lodgings) had taken up the Gauntlet againſt him, upon the Queſtion of Infant-Baptiſme; a thing which (I profeſſe) I did only to ſtop the current of a report ſpread farre and neare throughout the Nation (by more *indirect courſes* of ſome of his well-wil-lers) *that Mr.* Tombes *had challenged the whole Univerſity, and no man dared to take him up*: ſo that what I did therein, was onely a *di-rect courſe* to diſpoſſeſſe people of prejudice, *in-directly*

directly endeavoured to be suggested to them, against our Doctrine and Practise, rather then an *indirect course* to blast him and his; and therefore I barely related the matter of fact to a friend in *London*, who sent it to the *publique Intelligencer*; to insert it in his News. And as concerning any *misrelation*, or partiall narration; Mr. *Tombes* himselfe, (to my best knowledge) doth not so much as charge me, in his Letter printed a fortnight after in answer thereunto: onely he casts some reflections of scorne upon me and some others, his intended Antagonists then, and some unchristian censures, for which I leave Him to account with him, who will one day take an account of *hard speeches*) *I say*, I hope, he will not tax me with a like crime in transcribing this Catalogue of his harsh, and unsavoury expressions: which I have done that I might let him see, how large an *Index expurgatorius*, his polemicall Writings will need, when God shall call him to account, for reviling and reproaching the *foot-steps of his Anointed*, who walke in the good old way of *Pædo-Baptisme*, the High way of Gods Saints in former Ages, and a *way of holinesse*, in the experience of most of those that upon due consideration walk in it.

But I forbeare farther enlargements upon so unwelcome an Argument; leaving him to your learned Pennes, to be dealt withall in a more effectuall conviction then I dare (considering my small proportion of abilities) to undertake. In the meane while, I have made bold to dedicate this *short Dialogue* to your *Reverend Names*,

partly

partly, by way of *acknowledgment* of the great ſervice that you have already done in this Cauſe; partly, by way of *ſupplement* of a neceſſary Appendix thereunto, without: which all Diſputes in that kinde muſt needs faile of ther principall end; and partly, (in the laſt place) by way of *patronage*, being reſolved to turne over all Adverſaries, who ſhall, in any ſort, appeare againſt the *polemicall part* of the Truth delivered herein, to you the *great Champions in this controverſie*: but if any thing ſhall rationally and moderatly be urged by any one, to the prejudice of the *practicall part*, which I principally undertake, (what I have ſaid of the other, being onely by a way of *Preface* and *Introduction* thereunto) I promiſe faithfully, if ſo ſlender a piece may be honoured with a *Second Edition*, to take it up, and anſwer it in the body of the Diſcourſe, where it ſhall moſt properly fall in, without *perſonall conteſting* with any man, though I bee never ſo much *provoked* thereunto, as one that ſeeks not *Victory* but *Truth*.

One thing more I have to ſay to you, and *but one*, at preſent; and that is, to intreat you, if you pleaſe ſo farre to favour me, to give me your *private judgement* of this piece, and ſuch animadverſions, caſtigations, or additions, as you ſhall think fit to make to the whole or any part thereof; that if I have occaſion to appeare any more upon the Stage in this Cauſe, I may be the better furniſhed to render ſo uſefull a ſubject more ſerviceable to the publick good, to the which it is intended. This I take no ſhame to begge (even in print) becauſe I know ſuch a taske

as

s this (being hitherto undertaken by no other hat I have heard of) will need the concurrence f more abilities to performe it, as the worth and veight of it requires, then the single furniture f him, who is,

(*Reverend Sirs*,)

Your weake, *but* willing *and* (*I hope*) single-hearted, *fellow-labourer in the work of our Lord.*

Fro
Stud
Read
Nov
4. 1654.

SIMON FORD.

SIMON TORD

AN

Epiſtle to the *Reader* of this Treatiſe, eſpecially, of my owne Flock, in *Reading* in *Berk-ſhire.*

CHRISTIAN READER:

I *Addreſſe my ſelfe to thee in the threſhold of this Treatiſe, with a* twofold requeſt, *before thou ſpend thy cenſure upon it. The* one *is, that thou* read, *and the* other *is, that thou* pray over *it. Whatever by judgment be, I hope it will not deny me herein, and it concerne thee leſſe, then (in my apprehenſion) this doth.*

The reaſon why I deſire the firſt *of theſe, is becauſe I know many good books ſuffer under the un-*

juſt

just sentence of prejudice, and disaffection, before they are read. *It being motive enough to most engaged persons, on all hands, to condemne a booke, that its* Title page *speakes not on their side: And the* second, *I have this farther reason to beg at thy hands; because I know an* Unpraying Spirit *is very unfit to adventure upon the study of any* Practical subject *whatsoever. Practicall Truths alwayes carry some thing in them which goes against the graine of an heart, not* taught of God, *and managed by his holy Spirit.*

If I can but obtaine these two *things of thee, I doubt not my successe in this weake attempt towards thy satisfaction and settlement, in the practise and improvement of the Ordinance herein treated of.*

And next, (supposing that I have obtained my twofold request) I shall only adde a twofold advertisement *to thee concerning the following Treatise.*

First, *That I compose it in a* Dialogue-way *for two reasons,*

(1.) *That I might sute it to the capacities of such as are not able to make so profitable an use of books composed in a* Method of Art, *as of those that are framed in a* Method of Discourse.

(2.) *Because I see others who have gone before me in practicall discourses, have laboured in this way with abundant successe upon the ordinary sort of readers.*

Secondly, *that (the subject in the maine intent thereof being practicall) I have not beene so precisely carefull of expressions, as in a close* Controversie, *I would have beene. And therefoer*

fore if thou be one that (in point of cenſoriouſneſſe) wilt play at a ſmall game rather then ſit out, *I have my plea ready. I intended to direct the* Conſciencious, *not to pleaſe the* Criticall *Reader. I am ſure thoſe that are of the true* Eagle-breed *of Chriſtians, that* flie higheſt *in communion with God, and the exerciſe of practicall godlineſſe will not* ſtoope to catch flyes.

The Lord bleſſe this poor labour of mine unto thee for good, that thou maiſt hence know what uſe *to make of an* Ordinance, *which partly through Ignorance, and partly through* want of conſideration, *moſt Chriſtians doe too much profane; and thereby have, and doe ſtill provoke the Lord to ſuffer it to be* called in Queſtion, *and in divers places,* laid aſide *altogether. It being juſt with God to continue Ordinances no longer among a people, then they uſe them as Ordinances.*

And (laſtly) if thou receive any confirmation, ſatisfaction, excitation, or any other kinde of holy improvement hereby, let me intreate thee to put up one prayer, for the improveing and ſanctifying of the poor abilities of him, who is

From my Study in *Reading, November* 4. 1654

One of the meaneſt Servants of Chriſt, in the work of the Goſpel,

SIMON FORD.

A Preface, to the *Reader*, concerning the uſefulneſſe of theſe two Treatiſes.

HE vindication of Infant-baptiſme hath been the worke of many, ſince the time that in ſo publique a way it hath been oppoſed; and that their labour through grace, hath not been in vaine, the event doth demonſtrate. That way (notwithſtanding the greateſt of advantages that it hath found) having gained no conſiderable ground among us. The greateſt ſucceſſe that in any place it hath had, for the moſt part hath been upon the firſt apperance, and Novelty with theſe hath moſt taken, as is plain by their eaſy entrance and ſpeedy revolt, as ſoone

as any tenent more new hath ſhewed it ſelfe. Anti-pœdo-baptiſts *almoſt e-very where turning* Anti-baptiſts, *helping themſelves againſt that charge, with a diſtinction of water and ſpirit-baptimſe, being poſſeſs'd of the one (as they ſay they are) they tell us, there is no uſe of the other: and when the Apoſtle reaſons from the one to the other,* Act. 10. 49. *from Spirit-baptiſme to water-baptiſme, theſe argue from the one againſt the other. So that, ſo far as I have experience or intelligence, the number of* Re-baptiſts *is mightily ſhaken, and of thoſe that hold to that principle, they are very rare, that take not up with it, the utter denyall of the traduction of any original ſin, together with the whole body of Pelagianiſme. The learned hand with whom I and others have had more eſpecially to deale, ſtands not (I confeſſe) herein chargeable. He hath hitherto ſufficiently, if not over and*

and above, ſhewed himſelfe oppoſite to that way; but how inconſiderable his party is, to the oppoſite ſide, which the ſhakers ſieve hath left, is very manifeſt. It is hardly believed by the moſt, that there is a man of that party, that is not againſt originall ſin, for the freedome of will, reſpective to the moſt ſpirituall objects &c. A righteous thing with God, to divide them among themſelvs, that have divided themſelves from all the churches of the ſaints, not onely in this opinion (which ſome may judge of it ſelfe inconſiderable) but in all ways of Church-Communion. Judging us to be (as they doe) unbaptiſed perſons, it neceſſarily follows, that as to any Church-priviledge, we goe not above heathens. Such is their heathenous cenſure of the Churches of Chriſt Jeſus. In this worke our Reverend Author *hath prayſeworthily appeared, being of the laſt, he hath had indeed the advantage of the la*

bours of all that have gone before him: but that it may appeare that he rather deſerves the reputation of a leader, then a follower, in that which others have travailed leaſt, he hath appeared moſt, which is, the practicall uſe of this ordinance received in infancy. *Others have not been ſilent, as may be ſeene in their works: but of all that I have ſeene he is the moſt ample and full, no other in this holding any compariſon, ſo that the* promiſe in the frontiſpiece *is made good with much advantage. Here, if the fault be not thine owne, thou mayſt reap a triple benefit.* (1.) *ſatisfying replyes to their cavills that cry out of Infant-baptiſme (as ſome are apt to doe) as vain, childiſh and uſeleſſe. It is more then a wonder, that when men know that God choſe that age to be the time of initiation of his owne people, that any ſhould dare to charge it upon that bare account, to be without that profit.*

(2.)

(2.) *Usefull helps for the way of profiting, if thy heart be set to get profit. Here thou mayst learne, how faith on this account may be strengthened, repentance in the severall parts of it promoted, the fervor of love towards God kindled, the hatred of sin more deeply rooted; to goe over the whole, were to transcribe the work; And all of this, with that acuteness of judgement, elegancy of phrase, variety and plainness of expression, that delight may lead thee on to profit.* (3.) *In the* 2d part, *which now first appears in publique, thou hast over and above given in to thy hands, a vindication of this Infant-priviledge in that latitude, in which it hath happily come to our hands, and all ages of the Church have enjoyed. When mens wits have spoke what they can divise; our curtolling of it will be found the way to lose it. There is not an Argument of strength to* let in, *those that*

that men would be willing to admit, but it will take in thoſe with them, that ſome would refuſe. *That of covenant-holineſſe divolved from Anceſtors, is our bottom, (which Anti-pœdo-baptiſts therefore eagerly ſtrive to beat downe with the Jeſuits Arguments,) and this is an holineſſe of relation to, or ſeparation for God, diſtinguiſhed from that which is inherent, or by qualification: and all Infants borne in the Church (as the Apoſtle witneſſeth) are in this ſenſe holy. It hath been deſervedly judged an Argument of force to evince Infants Church-memberſhip and baptiſme, that they were once undoubtedly Church members, and it no where appearing that ever they were diſfranchiſed, therefore they are ſtill Church-members: and ſure it is, that at that time, when they were Church-members, ſo explicitely owned, it was in that latitude for which our Author doth contend, and hath hitherto been the pra-*

Etiſe

ctiſe of the Churches. If any ſhould ſet upon a deſigne, to undoe all that by commiſſion from Chriſt in many nations of the world is happily done, there could not (I believe) a more ready way be found then this to effect it; though thoſe that take it in hand, are far from any ſuch deſigne in it. If a man would goe about to undiſciple nations, and take off the Kingdoms of the world, that they ſhould be no longer the Lords or his Chriſts, what fayrer way could be found, then to take them off piece-meal and by parcells, here a family and there a family, in ſome congregations, almoſt all the familyes? if this way were held, how ſoone would it be, that in England we ſhould have few baptized familyes? How ordinarily do the iſſue of truly pious perſons prove exorbitant in their lives? If ſuch familyes ſhall now be ſtruck out of the liſt of Chriſtians, the whole race remains then extinct, and

muſt

muſt be lookt upon as Heathens, for ſuch are all unbaptized ones, that want all right to baptiſme. Let us looke into Judah, a Church where ſalvation was, and as it was with the royall familye there, we need not doubt, but that it alſo was with other familyes: David *and* Solomon, *good men, had* Reho-boam, *and* Abijam *ſucceding on the throne, and degenerating from their ways: if their poſterity had now been blotted out, that family might have been reckoned with thoſe of* Iſhmael *and* E-ſau, *and the Church had never had an* Aſa, *or* Jehoſhaphat *of that race. Many that followed theſe were worſe then thoſe that went before them, as* Jehoram, Ahaziah, Jehoaſh, *and* Amaziah, *eſpecially in ther later times. If the line had now been razed out, the Church had wanted an* Hezekiah, *and a* Joſiah. *Who is there that can ſay, that if this rigour had been uſed reſpective to their an-*

anceſtors, themſelves had ever been amongſt thoſe that are called by the name of Chriſtian. For ever bleſſed be God that it hath been by providence ordered otherwiſe. Learned Mr. Baxter *in his* Treatiſe of Infants Church-memberſhip and Baptiſme, *cap.* 13. *grounding an argument for Infants Church-memberſhip on thoſe words* Revel. 11. 15. the Kingdomes of this world are become the Kingdomes of our Lord and his Chriſt, *ſhews his juſt indignation againſt thoſe that will underſtand it of ſome part only of Kingdomes, that ſo they may exclude infants, and being meant (as it needs muſt be) of whole Kingdomes, we cannot exclude any infants, and we ſhall as ſoone find a Kingdome without* Infants, *as a Kingdome made up only of men* juſtifiingly and ſavingly believers. *Some pious perſons profeſſedly declare that they dare not baptiſe an Infant upon a* dogmaticall

ticall faith *in the parents, and I cannot but profesſe that being fairly called to it, I ſhould tremble at the guilt of refuſing it. I ſhould as ſoone be brought to ſtrip them of their* houſes, *or* Inheritances *divolved upon them from ſuch parents, to take the bread out of their mouths, as to debar them of this their* Birth-priviledge, *which I think alſo is the thoughts of many of our ſeemingly diſſenting bretheren, in that they are ſo well content, that others ſhould doe it in their ſtead, ſome of them exchanging with their brethren for that purpoſe, which ſpeaks their judgement not to be averſe from it. When God of his great long ſuffering continues his Kingdome with theſe, and ſuffers ſuch plants to have a ſtanding in his vinyard, who am I, that I ſhould take order otherwiſe? But I hold thee over long from the work it ſelfe where thou mayſt find more full ſatisfaction. As for ſuch things that he diſputes as poſ-*

ſible

ſible, or at moſt as probable, as he leaves it, ſo do I, to the liberty of thy judgement. For the Catechiſme *of which the* Printer *ſpeaks, I never ſaw it, but being extracted out of this worke, and ſpeaking principally to the practicall uſe of Infant-Baptiſme, I wiſh that no family wanted it. The Lord keepe us from dividing principles, that we may follow the truth in love, and grow up in all things in Chriſt, which is the prayer and through Gods grace ſhall be the endeavour of him who is,*

From my ſtudy in Tamworth Octob. 22 1656.

An unfeigned wellwiſher of the Churches peace and Edification,

TOMAS BLAKE.

A DIALOGUE

Concerning

The Practical use of INFANT-BAPTISM.

In this Dialogue the parties are, *Pædobaptista*, An Orthodox Minister, practising Infant-Baptism. *Asterius*, A wavering hearer, unsettled in the point in hand.

Pædobaptista.

NEighbour *Asterius*, I am glad to meet you so opportunely, where I may have the advantage of some private discourse with you; and the rather, because by your seldomer frequenting the publick Ordinances then formerly, I have some cause to feare you may have met with some seducer or other, and are either already fallen or endangered to fall from your former stedfastnesse.

Asterius. Indeed Sir, I have the more forborn your Congregation of late, because I find you are much altered in your way of preaching, a great part of your Sermons being made up of invectives against honest men that differ from you in opinion, whereas it is the duty of a Minister of the Gospel to preach up love and charity, and not division and dissention.

Pædo. But Neighbour, ſuppoſing that I or any other Miniſter of the Goſpel, do not diſcharge *our* duty in every particular as we ought; yet you are not thereby excuſed from doing *yours*. And yet (for my part) my conſcience beareth me witneſs that though I have (according to my duty) ſpoken ſharply of Seducers, and ſet them out in their colours, *that their folly may be made known to all men*: yet I have upon all occaſions been exceeding tender to thoſe wel-meaning people who are led away by them, according to the Apoſtles rule, *putting a difference*. But I pray you (Neighbour) tell me what honeſt men they are whoſe cauſe you thus plead, that I may be able to give you a more particular account of my carriage towards them, and the reaſons thereof for your fuller ſatisfaction.

Iudg. 23

After. Truly Sir, the men I plead for, are thoſe they call *Anabaptiſts*, divers of whom I know, who are (I hope) godly men, and ſuch as differ from you in nothing but the point of *Infant-Baptiſm*, and that in ſo ſmall a matter, that (me thinks) it might be reconciled without much adoe, at leaſt ſo far as that you might *love one another as brethren*.

Pædo. Indeed Neighbour, could you ſhew me any of that profeſſion who have given ſufficient proof of their real godlineſſe, differing only about the *Subject of Baptiſm* and peaceably waiting upon God in his Ordinances for ſatisfaction of their doubts, without endeavouring to ſeduce others, (which is the practiſe of godly and conſcientious diſſenters, from the publick received Doctrine and cuſtomes of the Church) I ſhould give

give them the *right hand of fellowſhip*, and love them with all my heart as Brethren, putting no difference in my affection and deportment, between them, and thoſe of mine own judgment and profeſſion. But you cannot be ignorant (Neighbour) how far different this Character is from thoſe of that way, that we in our parts have to deal withal; that they are (for the moſt part) ignorant of the grounds of Religion, looſe in their principles and lives, and there are very few of them who have given any ſufficient evidence of any practical godlineſſe, and (of thoſe few that have) very few of them ſtop at the point of *Anabaptiſm*, but withal run into *Arminian*, *Familiſtical*, and *Socinian* errors; withal defying the publick Ordinances, and railing at the Miniſtry which (if they were ever ſoundly converted) begot them to Chriſt; and laſtly, there is ſcarce one of them tainted this way, but maks himſelf by and by an active inſtrument to ſeduce as many as he can. Now ſuch muſt *be rebuked ſharply*, and though formerly they were accounted godly men, yet till they return from thoſe principles and practiſes, which are ſo inconſiſtent with godlineſſe, they are not to be ſo high in our thoughts, as till they diſcovered thoſe corruptions, they were, and ought to be. But I pray you neighbour, how long have you been an Advocate for them?

After. Truly Mr. *Pædobaptiſta*, not long, nor am I now engaged to take their part, by any relation I have to them as a Member of their Society; but I have been ſometimes in the company of ſome of them, where I have heard them thus

plead, and profeſs they love you with all their hearts, and wonder you ſhould be ſo bitter againſt them.

Pædo. And for my part, neighbor, I wonder as much at them, how they can think I ſhould not publickly preach againſt them, who take all occaſions to ſeduce my flock, and make uſe of all advantages to render my Perſon and Doctrine odious to my hearers. And as for the love they bear to me, I pray God I may never have need to make trial of it; but if I had, I fear it would prove a *Munſter-love*, where that party pretended no leſs love, till they got power into their hands, and then (in their ſingular love) they cut the throats of as many as openly durſt profeſs to differ from them. And truly neighbour, though they ſpeak fair to you, whom they hope to make a Proſelyte, yet compare but their *profeſſions of love* with their *practiſes*, you will not wonder at me if I will hardly believe them: for you do not ſee with what malice, and bitterneſſe they do in other companies rail at, revile, and reproach me and (eſpecially when they had hopes of encouragement from men in power) how often they have uttered threatning ſpeeches, and how many publick inſolencies and affronts they have offered me, even in mine own Congregation; and theſe cannot be arguments of any great love. But to leave that diſcourſe, and them to the recovery of a better mind in Gods time, I pray you friend, have they at no time endeavoured to inſtil their principles into you? which I ſuſpect, becauſe I obſerve you have had a child lately, and I perceive you make no haſte to baptize it.

I can-

I cannot deny(Sir) but I have had ſeveral diſcourſes with them concerning infant-Baptiſm, and by them I am rendred ſomewhat more unſatisfied in the point then formerly; which hath occaſioned that delaying the Baptiſm of my Child which you ſpeak of. *After.*

But neighbour, if Baptiſm be(as it is) an Ordinance of God to be applyed to Infants of believing Parents, then it is not ſafe to delay it upon any pretence whatſoever. For although God be not bound to his Ordinance ſo, as to give grace to all Elect children, at the inſtant of Baptiſm, yet (ſeeing Sacraments are not only bare ſigres and ſeals of the Covenant, but conduits of the grace of the Covenant, when and as God is pleaſed to diſpence it) I know not why that Sacrament to ſome Elect children, I mean thoſe that dye in infancy, may not be indeed the *laver of regeneration*, and they receive the *grace* of Baptiſm with the *ſigne*. For if no perſon can enter into the Kingdome of Heaven, except his perſon be juſtified, and his nature ſanctified, and God uſeth to diſpenſe theſe graces in ſome Ordinance or other, ſeeing ſuch Infants live not to be capable of any other Ordinance, why ſhould I not believe them regenerated in Baptiſm? And if ſo, a Parent cannot anſwer the neglect of any means regularly to be had, wherein grace may be conveyed into them. Nay, were there no more in the matter but this, that I deny God the *Title* which by the Covenant he hath to my ſeed, and that as ſoon as they are mine, I ſhould fear God would be as angry with *me* as he was with *Moſes*, for delaying to circumciſe his *Pædo.*

Childe, and I might be in as much danger as he, when *the Angel of the Lord met him in the way and sought to kill him.*

Exod. 4. 24

After. It seems then, Sir, you think it a *matter of necesity* to Baptize Children; I ever thought it an *indifferent thing*, that being a custome received amongst us, it might be done rather then give offence.

Pædo. I am sorry (neighbour) that ever you presented a Child to Baptism upon such grounds. Indeed I do, and you ought to look upon Baptism as an *Ordinance of God, signifying and sealing pardon of sins, and sanctification of nature to your childe, by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, engrafting him into the Church, or visible body of Christ, and engaging him to be the Lords*; And upon the account of a duty, so it is necessary that as soone as conveniently you may get a publick Congregration (for till such a time, I think there is no necessity of calling for a Minister to do it in private, for any weakness of the Infant or any other reason, although for the perversness of our people who have made it a custome, & are loath to leave it, we are fain to condescend to them herein) you do in the face af all his people, with the solemn conjunction of their prayers, give up your Child to God in this way.

What Baptism is.

After. And so I should, Sir, to morrow next, if I apprehend it as you do; but I am now stumbled at the *lawfulnesse* of it, so far am I from believing its *necessity* in the way of a duty.

Pædo. That Baptism is an Ordinance to which all those are to be admitted who are capable to receive it, I hope you will grant; and therefore if your

your Infant be capable of receiving Baptiſm, I think you will grant it alſo a duty to preſent it thereunto; for it is a ſin to deny any Ordinance to any to whom it belongs.

After. Yes, Sir, I ſhall grant you that, if you can but make it appear to me *that Infants are capable ſubjects of Baptiſm.*

Pædo. Well then, I ſhall endeavour to ſatisfie you therein in a few words; I will only ask you a Queſtion or two, to which I deſire a plain and poſitive anſwer from you: the firſt is,

Queſt. Where think you the hinderance lies, whether *on Gods part*, in not admitting Infants to that Ordinance: or *on the childs part*, as being not capable to receive it, by reaſon of his want of underſtanding, &c.

After. On both.

Pædo. Firſt, then, *on Gods part*, I ask you further.

Queſt. Seeing the *Covenant is the principal part of a Sacrament* (that being the *ſubſtance*, and the Sacraments but the *ſignes* or *ſeals* annexed to it) *do you think Infants of believing parents are in Covenant with God or no?*

After. I know not.

Pædo. But once they were ſo, were they not? did not God ſay to *Abraham*, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy ſeed in their genrations*, and that in infancy at *eight dayes old*; and if ſo, when did God turn out the ſeed of ſuch parents out of Covenant? when did God alter the Covenant of Grace, and in ſtead of, *I will be the God of believers, and their ſeed*, ſay, *I will* (henceforward) *be the God of believers* onely, *not of their ſeed.* Gen. 17.

After. I confeſs I know not, nor ever heard of ſuch an

alteration in the Covenant: but Sir, was not this Covenant made with the *Jewes* only?

Pædo. Yes, but so as that it extended to the *Gentiles* too, when they were taken into the Church; an example whereof God gave even then in taking *Abrahams Servants* and their children into Covenant with him, & afterwards in admitting converted Heathens into the Jewish Church, even to Christs time, with their children in their arms: Besides that the Apostle *Peter* speaking concerning the Covenant of Grace, tells converted Christians, both of Jewes and Gentiles, That the *promise belongs to them and their children*, Act. 2 39. And the Apostle *Paul* tells the *Corinthians*, that their *seed* (if one of the parents be a believer) *is holy*, that is, to God by Covenant, (not only *legitimate* or no *bastards*, for so they were not before, but born in lawful Matrimony, when both parents were Heathens) and the *Galatians*, that the *blessing of* Abraham *came upon the Gentiles by faith*; and the *Ephesians*, that the *Gentiles are coheirs with the Jewes in the same promise*, that is, the same Covenant, *Eph.* 3.6.

Gal. 3. 14.

After. But suppose all this, that the Covenant still holds concerning them, yet God having no where said they ought to have the seal of the Covenant administred; this will not warrant their Baptism.

Pædo. Nay, but friend, if God *admit* children in Infancy into Covenant, and will not *seal* that Covenant to them, what an aspersion do we lay upon him? An honest man will give his *seal*, if required, where he will give his *word*. Besides, if God gives children in Infancy the *substance*, the

deed

Deca it ſelf, will he deny them a *formality*, a *circumſtance*, the ſealing of it? Nay, may not I challenge what-ever *aſſurance* may be given me for quiet poſſeſſion, from him that makes over a *Deed* or *Writing* to me, and that in point of common equity? Beſides, conſidering that God never parted theſe two, the Covenant and the Seal in any age, but admitted to the one by vertue of the other; and laſtly, that any viſible evidence of an intereſt in the Covenant is the ground upon which the Seals are adminiſtred: as in the caſe of thoſe Converts, *Act.* 10.47. *Can any man forbid water that theſe ſhould not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghoſt as well as we.* The evidence that they gave that they had received the Holy Ghoſt ſhewed them to be in Covenant, ſeeing God did not beſtow thoſe gifts upon any perſons out of the Church, and thereupon the Apoſtle infers undeniably, that they had right to the Seal, becauſe they had a viſible Character of Covenanters upon them.

After. Yea, but thoſe perſons gave teſtimony in their own perſons by outward profeſſion. Infants cannot, and ſo we have not the ſame ground to ſay, that they have *received the Holy Ghoſt.*

Pædo. The *Holy Ghoſt* there ſpoken of is not the *ſanctifying grace of the Holy Ghoſt*, for the Church could not be aſſured of that. But the *extraordinary gifts* that the Holy Ghoſt then uſed to pour out upon Converts, which (though they were not required neceſſarily to be found in all that were baptized, yet) where they were found, they were an outward teſtimony that God had actually admitted ſuch into the Church, and ſo they were

were to be baptized and solemnly admitted by his Ministers. Now if God tell us himself that Infants of believing Parents are within the Covenant, & by consequence within the Church, is not that as sufficient, nay a more sufficient ground for us to proceed upon, then the *visible profession* of any man, or any extraordinary gifts, which have no necessary connection with holiness?

After. But why then do you not admit such Infants to the Sacrament of the Lords Supper?

Pædo. Because God requires a *particular qualification* to that Ordinance, which Infants are not capable of, to wit, the exercise of actual grace in *examination, discerning the Lords Body, and remembring the death of Christ*. Besides, the different nature of the Sacraments hints unto us a special difference in this case: for the Sacrament of Baptism being a Sacrament of *Regeneration*, and so of *admission into the Church*, may admit Infants (who are capable of that grace, else dying Infants cannot be saved:) But the other Sacrament being a Sacrament of *improvement & spiritual growth in Christ*, requires som standing in the Church, and strength of stomack, and so is the proper Ordinance for grown Christians, as the food of grace actually received.

After. I confesse I see a disproportion between the two Sacraments, sufficient to satisfie me in that Objection. But is there any thing more to be pleaded on Gods part for the right of Infants to this Ordinance?

Pædo. Yes, and therein also I shall appeal to your own conscience in this question more, *What think you of the eternal condition of Infants?*

are any of them saved, dying in Infancy?

Surely they are, although I must tell you, some doubt whether the Scripture affirm any thing in that point or no? *After.*

I am glad you have not lost all your charity towards them; but your charity must be grounded, else you will quickly be shaken out of that too; and therefore for your confirmation in that point, I will shew you a little Scripture-evidence to settle it upon your spirits. *Paedo.*

And truly Sir, I shall willingly entertaine it, that I may be able to answer those that endeavour to stumble me herein. *After.*

Well then, what think you of *Davids child*, that dyed the seventh day, either after its birth, or the denunciation of that judgement by *Nathan*, all agree it dyed in infancy: What means *David* when he saith, *I shall go to it, but it shall not return to me?* 2 Sam. 12. 23. *Paedo.*

It may be he means, *to the place of the dead, the Grave.* *After.*

No, surely, he means *the Kingdome of Heaven.* *Paedo.*

How doth that appeare? *After.*

Because *David comforts* himself with this consideration. And it had been a *poor comfort* to *David* to consider that he should one day lie by his child in the Grave; but that he hoped for a more comfortable meeting with it after death, which must needs be in the Kingdome of Heaven: besides, it would rather have been a great *affliction* to him to think that his child was *dead*, if he had no ground to believe other then that he was *damned*. For we find in the case of *Absalom*, *Paedo.*

Solom. concerning whose salvation he had cause to doubt, how he mournes and would not be comforted, *chap.* 18.33.

And the Apostle that moderats the mourning of Christian Friends for their dead, 1 *Thess.* 4.13. doth it from this principle, that they were *not without hope* of their salvation; which strongly concludes, that the death of friends of whose salvation we have no ground of hope, may deservedly the more afflict us: and by consequence, if *David* were out of hope of his childs salvation, he had little reason to *put off his mourning* upon the death of his child, and had more cause by far *to keep it on*, seeing whilst the child lived, he had cause to believe it in a safer condition. But to leave that, and proceed; what do you think, *did not thousands of the Jews children dye in Infancy?*

After. Yes, no doubt.

Pedo. And surely you will not say they were all damned.

After. Possibly they might, for any thing we find written to the contrary.

Pedo. Say you so? *Was God in Covenant with them or no?*

After. Yes, he was in Covenant with *them, and their seed.*

Pedo. And *have we ground to think that God will break his part of the Covenant with any one, who doth not break with him?*

After. No surely, for he is a God that *keepeth promise and Covenant for ever*; & is so far from that, that he keeps Covenant with us, when we deal treacherously and perfidiously with him.

Pedo. Well then, the Jews Infants dying in infancy,

we

we muſt judg, were not excluded the Kingdom of Heaven, ſeeing they dyed under the wing of Gods Covenant, which on their part they could not forfeit by any actual ſin, and without actual forfeiture we have no warrant to think God annulls his Covenant with any one.

After. But that Covenant with *Abraham* and his ſeed, was a covenant of outward things, as ſome ſay, *viz.* to give them the *Land of Canaan.*

Pado. But it was a Covenant made with *all his ſeed*, for upon the account thereof they were all circumciſed, and admitted to the Paſſover.

Suppoſe that, what follows thence?

After. Yes, this follows, That it was *more then an outward Covenant*, containing the promiſe of a Temporal *Canaan*; for elſe thoſe children of *Abraham* that dyed in infancy, and the reſt of his poſterity, who dyed out of the land of *Canaan*, had had no ſhare in it, and ſo the Seal to them had confirmed a *meer blank* or as bad, to wit, *ſuch a deed as they ſhould never be the better for.*

Pado. And therefore no doubt the promiſe of *Canaan* is rather an *addition* to the Covenant, then the *ſubſtance of it*; or if of the ſubſtance of it, it implyes *more* then the Land ſo called, and muſt be underſtood Typically of a ſpiritual *Canaan*, the Kingdome of Heaven. And ſo God fulfilled the Covenant to thoſe believers, and elected Infants who enjoyed not the temporal *Canaan*, ſeeing they enjoyed that *other reſt* which *Jeſus*, not *Joſhua* brought them to: which is that that the Apoſtle affirms, *Heb.* 3. And ſo, the addition of the promiſe of *Canaan* to the Covenant of *Abraham*, is a firmer argument for me to prove the

the ſalvation of thoſe Infants dying in Infancy, to whom Temporal *Canaan* was no mercy.

But it is clear, that the ſubſtance of the Covenant was Spiritual, a Covenant of Grace, becauſe Circumciſion annexed to it as a Seal, ſignified thoſe Spiritual and ſaving mercies, *Deut.* 30. 6. *Rom.* 4. 11. *Col* 2. 11, 12.

After. But what doth that concern our Infants, who are not of *Abrahams* loines?

Pedo. Yes, for by the former argument I have proved the Covenant with *Abraham* and believing Gentiles the ſame: Beſides, can it be imagined that God who gave ſalvation to Infant-Jews, ſhall exclude the Infants of the believing Gentiles out of the Kingdome of Glory, who are ten thouſand times the number, in all probability? what is there that ſhould make ſo great a difference, or on what word can we ground the conceit of ſo great a difference?

After. Well, I ſuppoſe this proved ſufficiently, that Infants may be ſaved; but what is that to prove that they may be Baptized?

Pedo. I have one argument more in this point, and then I will ſhew you. You find our Saviour Chriſt affirming no leſſe in poſitive terms. *Mat.* 19. 15, 16. recorded by two other Evangliſts alſo, *Suffer little children to come unto me, for of ſuch is the Kingdome of heaven.* And it is remarkable, that *Luke* when he relates the ſame ſtory, to aſſure us, that they were not capable of actual faith, calls them βρέφη, Infants, *Luk.* 18 15 a word which conſtantly is uſed to ſignifie that *tender age*, and never applyed to any *adult children.*

After. But it is ſaid, that *of ſuch is the Kingdome of God;*

God; not of *theſe*, but of *ſuch as theſe*, *i.e.* ſay the Adverſaries of Infant-Baptiſm, of thoſe that are meek, humble, &c. like theſe.

Surely, friend this muſt needs be a *wretched evaſion*; for can any man think that Chriſt beſtows bleſſings upon any thing meerely upon a bare ſimilitude between Saints and it? why then doth he not bleſs ſheep, doves, ſerpents, &c. between whom and Saints there is no leſſe reſemblance? Is the ſolemn bleſſing of Chriſt beſtowed upon ſuch ſlight grounds? *Pædo.*

I might poſſibly have ſpared much of this labour upon your former conceſſion, but that I was willing to eſtabliſh your belief in this point upon Scripture-grounds: and therefore I ſhall now ſhew you what uſe I make of that hath been ſaid.

Yea Sir, I expect you ſhould now ſhew how the conceſſion of *ſalvation* to Infants, concludes their *right to Baptiſm*. *After.*

Thus, Salvation is not extended by the Scripture beyond the Church; Chriſt is the *Saviour of his body*, and that only, *Eph.* 5.23. If then Infants be *capable of ſalvation*, they are *of the body*; and if ſo, have right to the *Seal of admiſſion*, by which Members are engrafted thereinto, which is Baptiſm. *Pædo.*

Yes, without doubt, if Infants be ſaved, it follows that they are Members of the *Church inviſible*; but Baptiſm is not adminiſtred upon the account of Membership in the *Church inviſible*, except it appear alſo that any of them belong to the *Church viſible*. *After.*

This I ſhall undertake therefore, to evince in the *Pædo.*

the next place upon the former grounds: surely you being convinced that Infants are not on *Gods part* excluded from an interest in the Covenant of grace & salvation by it, either extend that *charity to all* Infants, or *some* only; if to *all* Infants, your charity is no Scriptural charity, because the Scripture affirms all to be born in original sinne, and adds moreover, that divers infants who never committed actual sinne, dyed upon that account everlastingly, for the Apostle tells us so expressly, *Rom.* 5.14. And as for those that were destroyed in the fire of *Sodom* and its neighbour Cities, the Apostle *Jude* tells us that they all *suffer the vengeance of eternal fire*; and surely many hundreds of them were Infants. If your charity extend to *some* Infants only, I would fain know what ground there is upon which your charity may hope the salvation of *some* Infants more then *others*. Upon what ground did *David* hope the salvation of *his child*, more then of any child of the cursed *Canaanites*? Upon what ground can any *Christian* expect the same concerning his child, more then concerning the child of a *Turk* or an *Indian*? If there be a rule on which this difference is founded, that rule will make *those* Infants visible Church-Members, and *others* not. For every one concerning whose salvation the Church have present warrantable ground to hope, is *by right* a Member thereof, seeing the *Church on earth* hath no reason to shut the doors against such, whom it is perswaded God will (they dying in such a condition) admit into *Heaven*.

Jude 7.

After. But is there such a ground of distinguish-

ing

ing Charity to Infants, I pray what is it?

Pædo. There is, and that is, the *parents viſible Church-membership, and external relation to the Covenant*; for the Covenant (as was before ſaid) admitting parents, admits their ſeed with them: and by conſequence, the ſeed of thoſe who are in Covenant themſelves, are in Covenant upon their account.

Now ſeeing the Covenant runs only to *Believers and their ſeed*, and no where to *the ſeed of profeſſed unbelievers*; we may and muſt conclude, that the Infant ſeed of ſuch unbelievers have no hope of ſalvation, and the ſeed of profeſſed believers have; and by conſequence it follows, that *theſe* are viſible Church-Members upon the former ground, and *thoſe* not ſo.

Nay, we have as much, if not more ground to acknowledg the Church-membership of ſuch *Infants* then of *grown Chriſtians*, becauſe our acknowledgment of theſe depends upon their *own* teſtimony only in a viſible profeſſion, which may be counterfeit. But ſuch Infants are accepted as Church-members upon a *divine* Teſtimony concerning them and their condition, which in their preſent infant-ſtate they cannot be liable to any ſuſpition of defeating by hypocriſie. *Simon Magus* profeſſing, was a *Church-member* and an *Hypocrite*; Infants being by God owned for Church-members, poſſibly may be *non-elected* but cannot be *hypocrites*.

Aſter. I confeſſe Sir, you ſay more for the Baptizing of Infants, then I have before heard, and I do not at the preſent ſee what may be materially objected; yet is there one thing that ſticks with me more then all the reſt, and that is *the uſeleſſe-*

neſs of this Doctrine, and of this Ordinance ſo adminiſtred, ſeeing Infants at preſent can make no uſe of it; and in my judgement there is no ſuch advantage to be made by them, when they come to years of diſcretion, of that Baptiſm which in *Infancy* they received, as might be made of the ſame received at *years of judgment* upon their own perſonal profeſſion.

Pædo. You then conceive an hinderance *on the childs part*, but I ſhall not eaſily grant you, that Baptiſm is altogether uſeleſſe unto Infants *dying in infancy*; For (beſides that divers Divines of ſpecial note, do hold the *juſtification of all duely baptized Infants in Baptiſm, & dying in infancy, and the waſhing away the guilt of original ſin from all Infants ſo baptized, whether elect or non-elect*; which (I confeſs) I cannot ſwallow in ſuch a latitude, for divers reaſons, which it is beſide my preſent buſineſſe to alledge, and the main of them is, that this Doctrine ſeems too much to favour *Apoſtacy from grace*) you know I have before given you ſome grounds why I perſwade my ſelf, that *ſome Infants*, to wit, *ſuch as being elected die in Infancy, are juſtified and ſanctified in the adminiſtration of that Ordinance.*

Dr. *Sam. Wardi Theſis.*

But not to inſiſt further on that, I ſhall undertake (by Gods aſſiſtance) to ſhew you, before we part, ſomething more then you deſire in this point, *viz.*

That there is much more advantage to be made in order to ſanctification, conſolation, and ſeveral other ways, of the Doctrine and practice of Infant-Baptiſm, then of that Doctrine and practiſe that limits Baptiſm only

ly to perſonal profeſſion at years of diſcretion. If I prove it more uſeful, I do with advantage prove it as uſeful, which is the thing you queſtion.

I grant it is more then I deſire, and if you perform this, I ſhall entirely yeild you the whole queſtion: For (to tell you the truth) my ſelf, and ſuch as I am, being plain and unlearned men, are not ſo capable of judging of thoſe *arguments* that are diſputed on both ſides in this matter: wherefore we rather leave them to be examined by learned men. But that that prevails moſt with us, is the *uſeleſsneſs* of that adminiſtration, and the foundations upon which it is built; together with the *advantage* which in this particular, we conceive, the contrary principles and practiſe have in point of benefit; wherefore I pray you proceed in your intendment. *After.*

Very willingly I ſhall, for (although I think it no ſufficient Argument to prove a *divine Inſtitution* in any thing, to ſhew how *uſeful* it may be; becauſe I know that it is an advantage given to thoſe that ſhall at any time be willing to innovate; in which caſes it is an eaſie matter for the wit of man to find out ſome practical uſe or other of every ſuch invention of their own braines; (and hereof we have had ſufficient experience in thoſe who obtruded a fardel of ceremonies upon this Church of late years, and would have ſcrewed them up to a Divine Inſtitution upon ſuch grounds, yet) when any thing in queſtion, as to Divine Inſtitution, hath much countenance from *Scripture*, interpteted by the conſtant practice of the *beſt antiquity*, it may *Pædo.*

be of considerable advantage to turn the scales in a rational mans judgment, that it hath a special use towards the promoting of godliness for the present, & assuring happiness for the future: especially when an *unquestionable Divine Institution* hath appointed formerly a *parallel* Ordinance for the same uses, and those uses are as evidently, without forced consequences, to be made of the institution *in question*, as ever of that former wch is *out of question*, which is the case of *Baptism*, with relation to *Circumcision*, which was instituted by God to signifie the *same things* with Baptism, and was then used for the same *ends*.

Wherefore I very well like your motion in this particular, and concur with you in your resolution, to leave the *notional part* of this question, and examine the *practical part*, and that for these additional reasons.

1. Because most people *sell* this precious *birthright* of theirs, and their Infants, in Gods Covenant, and (by consequence) in Baptism, for as little as *Esau* (who therefore is called *prophane Esau*, because he sold the *Church-privileg* of his posterity, not because he sold a meer *outward prerogative* of being the first-born, for that had at most been but *folly*, or (at most) but a *civil injury* to his posterity, and not in any sense *profaneness*, seeing an heir that sells away his Land of Inheritance, is not therefore to be called *prophane*) I say, many like *Esau*, sell his birth-right, because they knew not what *good it would do unto them*.

Heb. 12. 16

Gen. 25. 23

2. Because I perceive the main Art of Seducers, in their snares they lay for plain-meaning people, lyes that way, they seek to prove it

lawful,

wful; becauſe *unuſeful*. For it is no hard matter for them to perſwade ſilly people, that Infants being uncapable of underſtanding what is done to them in Baptiſm, may as well be *without* it as *with* it; ſeeing all the uſe they can make of it, is at years of diſcretion; and if ſo, were it not better (ſay they) to defer the *adminiſtration* of that till ſuch years, whereof no *uſe* can be made till then?

3. Becauſe I perceive it is the Divils great policy to turn off the minds of men from the *practical improvement* of their Baptiſm, by filling of their heads with *notions*, and engaging them in diſputes about the *adminiſtration of it*; and as he deals in *this*, ſo in the *other Sacrament*, he hath endeavoured and ſtill endeavours (if poſſible) to keep men from enjoying of it by ſuch queſtions; ſo heretofore, by ſtirring Diſputes about *Altars*, and *Rayles*, and *Geſtures* and the *Liturgy* wherein it was adminiſtred, and *badneſs of Miniſters* adminiſtring; and of late about *fit communicants*, *incapacity of adminiſtration for want of an eſtabliſhed Government* &c. He hath ſtill prevailed with divers, ſo far as to exclude them from it for divers years together. Now there is no ſuch way to countermine him herein, as by endeavouring to lift up the *practical part* of Sacraments in the minds of men, as high as ever the *controverſal part* was.

4. Becauſe I have cauſe to conceive, that Infant-Baptiſm being an *engaging Ordinance*, hath (under God) been ſanctified to the *preſervation* of divers perſons in theſe giddy times in the belief of that *Truth wherein they were Baptized*;

whereas it appeares (on the other ſide) that the judgment of God hath in no one thing more viſibly broken forth againſt the generality of the renouncers thereof, then *in giving them over* to the renouncing thoſe principles and wayes of God to which they were then engaged; God uſually puniſhing *partial* Apoſtacy with *total* and *univerſal* back-ſliding.

But to the proofs, and firſt, *(in general)* no queſtion but God knew, when he had a Church to ſet up in the world in *Abrahams* time, at *what age* it was fitteſt, and moſt beneficial to admit Members into it; yet we ſee that (although he took the firſt root *Abraham* when he was a *grown tree* at years of diſcretion, yet) he choſe rather to take the reſt of the *plants* when they were *twigs* in their infancy. And doubtleſs ſeeing Circumciſion was (as Baptiſm is) an *engaging Ordinance* obliging them to God, and God to them, he knew it was of more uſe for *his* glory and ſervice, and *their* profit and comfort, to ratifie that engagement betimes; and I perſwade my ſelf, had it been poſſible for *Abraham* to have been at his choice, he would have rather been admitted in Infancy as his ſeed were, for his own profit, upon Arguments which you ſhall heare anon. And I conceive the like of thoſe men and women that were baptized at years of diſcretion, that they, had they been alike at liberty, would have made the like choice.

After. Sir, I deſire thoſe grounds you ſpeak of, for till I ſee them, I cannot conceive ſuch a choice probable.

Pædo. I will perform your deſire, and ſo proceed to *particular* Arguments. Firſt

First then, in point of *Sanctification*. The grounds & practise of *Infant-Baptism* are more *sanctifying* then those of Baptism received *at riper age*, and more conduce to the acting thereof in all its latitude. *Sanctification* consists of two parts.

{ *Mortification*, or a death unto sin.
{ *Vivification*, or a life unto God.

Now Sacraments are helpful to Sanctification, either *morally* by motive and engagement to the practice of it, or *physically*, by conveying strength and power thereunto.

As to the latter of these. Sacraments covey Grace from God, as other means do, meerly according to his good pleasure; without any relation to the capacity of the creature; and surely God can work Grace in Infants, as well as in elder persons, by infusion; and therefore herein I see no ground to lay any comparison; so that I shall undertake only the former of these wayes, wherein God sanctifies by Sacraments, *viz.* by way of *motive* or *engagement* on our parts; this I shall shew,

{ 1. From the *grounds* on which its practised.
{ 2. From ths *practise* it self.

And shall plainly evidence to you, that the *grounds* of Infant-Baptism afford strong *motives*, and the *practise* of it stronger *engagements* to Sanctification in both the fore-mentioned parts, then the contrary grounds & practise can, and I hope I proceed according to your mind.

I like your method well, I pray you proceed, as you have begun. *After.*

Pædo. Well then neighbour, to begin with *motives to mortification of sin*) The *ground* of Infant-Baptism (as I told you) is *Gods Covenant with Ancestors, and theirs with God.* Now I ask you, Neighbour, supposing you had an enmity against two persons, the one upon some *late personal injury* received from him, the other not only upon a personal, but upon an *ancient hereditary quarrel*, running in the blood, like that of the *Guelphs and Gibellines*: which of the two were likely to undergoe the heaviest shock of your revenge?

After. Surely the *hereditary* enemie.

Pædo. Well then, apply this to the present case, To be born under the *Covenant of Ancestors*, renders sin an *hereditary* enemy, whereas without that consideration, a mans engagement against it is only a *personal* quarrel.

And as for the *practise* of Infant-Baptism, no question it promotes the *mortification of sin*, with far more vigour and activity then the same received at riper years; for that enmity is most mortal which grows up with a man *from the very cradle*: surely, let a mans engagements against sin otherwise be never so strong, yet are they much heightened by continuance; and without all question, the all-wise God fore-saw that it would be no small advantage to this work of *cutting off the body of the sinns of the flesh*, to engage his against it in Infancy, as he did in Circumcision, and particularly as to *original sin*, (wherein the life of sin consists.) Infant-Baptism (as Circumcision of old) affords a *real conviction* of it, and engagement against it. That Infants need Baptismal *washing*, proclaims them

Col. 2. 11

filthy

filthy even as ſoon as they are born; which, ſeeing they cannot then be by *actual* ſinne, it remaines that they muſt needs be ſo from the *womb*. Thus the cutting off of the *fore-skins of the fleſh* of Infants of old, ſignifying the cutting off the *fore-skin of the heart*, as often as they reflected upon that Ordinance then received, the Jews muſt needs be minded, that they brought *hearts* into the world with them that needed to be *circumciſed*. Now Baptiſm received *at years of diſcretion*, doth not give any particular evidence againſt *original ſin*, ſeeing it is adminiſtred after the commiſſion of many actual corruptions: It muſt indeed mind them that they are *filthy* elſe what need of *waſhing*, but that they are *filthy from the womb*, it remembers them not. And poſſibly the renunciation of Infant-Baptiſm, (being ſo undeniable a conviction of original ſin) may be a cauſe why ſo many of that way, deny *original ſin* together with *Infant-Baptiſm*.

Nor is it a leſs effectual *engagement* againſt it, for by a perſon baptized in Infancy, there is a ſolemn league and confederacy (if I may ſo expreſs my ſelf) entred into with the Spirit of God againſt it, to begin from the very hour, to grow up with him, and ſhew it ſelf againſt all motions and affections ſtirred up in his heart thereby: whereas in perſons baptized at riper years, this engagement is of a far later date, and by conſequence more morally invalid.

And (as to actual ſin) no queſtion but Infant-Baptiſm doth lay a very great obligation upon many perſons to deteſt it, when they conſider that they were from their cradle *buried with*

Chri

Christ in baptism, and therein engaged not to admit sin to *reign in their mortal bodies*, *Rom.*6.12 And therefore God thinks fit to engage them against it in that age, before they commit any, to shew them that they must begin to die to it fro thenceforth, and not to admit any acquaintance with it in any succeeding part of their lives.

After. But what say you to the other part of Sanctification which consists in our *resurrection to newness of life*? Hath Infant-Baptism the advantage of promoting that more then the same administration at riper years?

Pædo. Yes, no question, whether you look upon it in the *Graces* or *Duties* thereof. First, in the *exercising saving graces*; It promotes the actings of several graces, as

1. *Faith*: which I shall demonstrate,

{1. From the ground / 2. From the practise} of Infant-Baptism.

1. The *ground* of Infant-Baptism, Gods Covenant with us in our Ancestors, carries herein great weight. It is a very usual thing for posterity to put much confidence in such an one as hath been a constant friend to the family whence they are descended: Thence the Psalmist, *Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place from generation to generation; and our fathers have told us what wonders thou didst in their dayes*, &c. Thence the Saints in their prayers so often act faith upon the Covenant of fore-fathers, *Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saith Moses*, *Exod.*32.13 and they do not do it rashly, for God gives sufficient ground for such a confidence in this particular. He professeth himself *a God shewing mer-*

Psal. 90.1
Psal.44.1

cy

ey unto thouſands of generations of them that love him (in the ſecond Commandement) and that not barely upon their *perſonal* account, but upon the account of their *parents*, as he *viſits the iniquity of the parents that hate him, upon the third and fourth generation*; although they be not perſonally partakers of their guilt.

God puts a ſpecial Emphaſis of favour upon the people of *Iſrael*, when he calls them the *ſeed of Abraham his friend*, *Iſai.* 41. 8. *q. d.* I owe you more favour then other, becauſe you are the ſeed of a good friend of mine, and I allow you to make uſe of me accordingly.

And this in *ſpiritual* and *temporal* mercies.

In *ſpiritual* mercies, God beſtows them (many times) upon the account of his Covenant with Anceſtors, on their children. Two eminent proofs I have for it. The one is *Rom.* 11.28. where the Apoſtle diſcourſing of the calling of the Jewes to Chriſt in the latter dayes, tells the Gentiles, that it is true, God hath unchurched them, that the Gentiles might be *grafted into their place*; for (ſaith he) *as touching the Goſpel, they are enemies for your ſake*, but they ſhall not alwayes continue ſo; for *as touching the election, the remnant which are according to the election of grace* (as he calls them *ver.* 5) *they are beloved, i.e.* ſo as to be called home in Gods time, *for the Fathers ſakes*. Gods Covenant with their fore-fathers reflects his ſpecial love upon them in converſion, at ſo many hundred years diſtance. The other place is *Luk.* 1.71. &c. where *Zacharias* makes Gods Covenant with the fore-fathers the riſe and ſpring of that great mercy, *deliverance from the hand of*

their

their enemies, to serve him in righteousnes & holines before him all the dayes of their lives, v. 75.

After. Yea, but to this (methinks) I see a double objection arising; The first is, That *Zacharias* seems rather to lay the weight of his speech upon the *particular promise* of Christ made to *Abraham*, to be fulfilled to his posterity, then upon any *hereditary privilege* (as you seem to intimate) accrewing to the posterity of *Abraham* and the rest of the Fathers, by their faith, and relation to God thereby.

The 2d. is, That though God vouchsafed such an *hereditary* privilege to *them*, yet it may not without like expres warrant be extended to more then them.

Pedo. I answer you in a word to both; To the *first objection* I say, that it is true, that he speaks of a *particular promise to Abraham* to be fulfilled upon his posterity; but yet the matter of it is only a branch of the *general Covenant*, that he would be *his God, & the God of his seed*; for we have no *particular* promise of sanctification made to *Abraham* on the behalf of his Posterity, but what is included in that *general* one. Indeed he *sent Christ to take flesh of his loins* in pursuance of a *particular promise*, but these *effects* of Christs sending *deliverance from spiritual enemies, &c.* are collected from the *general promise*. And so the Apostle *Peter* interprets it, Act. 3.25. *You are* (saith he) *the children of the Prophets, and of the Covenant made with the fathers, saying to Abraham, in thy seed shall all the Nations of the earth be blessed.* But what are they the better for this promise of Christ (the seed here meant) more then all the fami-

milies of the earth beſides, who are as much concerned in it as they are? Yes, for they being the ſeed of *thoſe Fathers* to whom the promiſe was made, and who were then the *only perſons in viſible covenant with God*, their ſeed (according to the general promiſe,) are dignified above others upon that account, in that *God having raiſed Jeſus, ſent him* [*firſt*] (mark the Emphaſis of that word *firſt*) *to turn them from their iniquities*: *q.d.* if any bleſſing be derived from Chriſt unto men, the firſt fruits ſhall be beſtowed upon the ſeed of the Fathers and the Prophets, ſutable to that other place, *It behoved that the word of God ſhould* [*firſt*] *have been ſpoken to you*, Act. 13.46. And ſo we find that in their 2d coming in, the Gentiles are every where ſpokē of as appendices to them.

To the *other* Objection, I ſay no more then was ſaid before, that *the bleſſing of Abraham is come upon the Gentiles by faith* and by conſequence, if vocation, if ſanctification of the Poſterity of *Abraham* were a fruit of the promiſe, *I will be thy God, & the God of thy ſeed*; it may no leſs be claimed by the ſeed of Believers *now*, then *formerly*.

You bring that Scripture more to the purpoſe then I imagined; but I pray you proceed in your Argument. *After.*

I wil. Suppoſe we that *Gods Covenant with forefathers includes the giving grace to their ſeed*, & then here is a ſpecial ground to act faith upon, from an hereditary Covenant; and no queſtion, if we plead it believingly, we may find the benefit of it. *Pedo.*

But if *grace* be *hereditary*, how comes it to paſſe then, that ſo many of the *Seed* of Godly Parents are ſo graceleſs. *After.*

1. Be-

Pædo. 1. Becauſe God beſtows it *according to election*: Grace is not ſo hereditary as Lands and Eſtates are, to the children of ſuch or ſuch a mans body begotten, what ever they be; but it is given to the Elect Poſterity, with ſpecial reſpect to the Covenant of fore-fathers, in the execution of that decree of Election. This difference the Apoſtle makes between Jews and Jews; the *Election have obtained it*, and *the Election are beloved for the fathers ſakes.*

2. Becauſe, though there be a Covenant on *Gods part*, yet it is not (on the *parents part*) improved on the behalf of their children as it ought to be; they do not plead it as they ſhould with God; at leaſt they do not improve it in the uſe of all means, being too indulgent and remiſs in their education, a means whereunto God hath annexed many promiſes of Grace, *Pro.* 23. 13. & 22 15. So *David* to *Adonijah* and *Abſalom*, he neglected their education, and God denied the bleſſing.

Now whatever Gods ſecret decree is, we are to blame our ſelves if any promiſe do not take effect, becauſe that decree never interpoſeth to hinder the performance of a promiſe to any one that duly pleads it.

And the truth is, the Covenant with fore-fathers is the moſt likely ground upon which Grace can be pleaded for on my behalf: for ſuppoſing me in a ſtate of nature, I have no Covenant made with me in mine owne perſon; and as to Gods Covenant with Chriſt concerning me, that is a ſecret thing, and not pleadable: but my parents and the Church may plead the Covenant of

of Anceſtors on my behalf, as I ſhall ſhew more ſatisfactorily hereafter.

And for *Temporals*, however the former Doctrine concerning the beſtowing of ſpiritual graces upon a parental Covenant, may by ſome be ſuppoſed, to admit of ſome diſpute; yet it is clear enough in things of an inferiour nature, that the Lord hath promiſed, and the Saints have been encouraged in a prayer of Faith to ask them upon that account.

As to *Gods engagements* in this kind, I might produce a crowd of ſpecial places to this purpoſe, See *Pſa.*25.13.& 37.25,. 6. *Pro.*11.21. So *Iſa.*65 23. and abundance of Scriptures more.

And how frequently the *Saints* have hung upon this twig, and kept up their faith from ſinking, how often they have pleaded it in prayer, I ſuppoſe is no leſs evident from Scripture. Surely it is not for nothing that in the petitions of the Saints for temporal mercies, they mention God under this notion. *O God, the God of our Fathers*, ſayes *Jehoſhaphat*, when he prayes againſt his potent and numerous enemies, 2 *Chr* 20.6. and *David* when he appeals to God in a caſe of ſuſpicion, that the *Benjamites* were come to betray him at *Ziklag*, appeals to him under that title, *If ye be come to betray me to mine enemies, the God of our Fathers look thereon and requite it.* 1 Chr. 12. 18. Undoubtedly *David* and *Jehoſhaphat* could and did ſay, *my God*; yet they choſe rather in ſtraights to plead by that Title, as an additional ſtrength to their plea, over and above their own intereſt in him; and upon that account it is that Saints *confeſs their fathers ſins* in ſolemn confeſ-

feſſion, as apprehending a breach in their Fathers Covenant, till it be made up, to be a bar to their claim. As *Neh.* 9.16. 34. and urge the faith of their parents, and their experience of Gods faithfulneſs to them, *Pſa.* 22.4. *Our Fathers truſted in thee, they truſted, and thou didſt deliver them*; ſurely it is more then if they had ſaid of any other believers not related to them, *ſuch and ſuch truſted in thee, &c.* It is as much indeed as if they had ſaid, *Lord we are of a believing race, and a race to whom thou haſt ſhewed abundance of ancient favours, and we hope thou wilt remember that we that ſeek thee now, are not only ſuch as truſt in thee our ſelves, but ſuch as deſcend from them that truſted in thee before we were born*; And indeed (even amongſt men) it is an urgent plea for any favour, to be able to draw an inducement to any ones kindneſſe and bounty from a relation of league or friendſhip between his and our Anceſtors: Surely if *principles of ingenuity*, ſo wrought in *David*, that he could not but remember to do *kindneſs to Mephiboſheth for his father Jonathans ſake*, as 2Sā. 9.7. We cānot think but there are ſome *remnants of love* in Gods breſt towards the poſterity of his old friends, when they are dead and gone. It is likely that all the while that the remembrance of *Joſeph* laſted in *Egypt*, the *Iſraelites* were well intreated for his ſake. For the very preface that is made to the ſtory of their oppreſſion, *Exod.* 1.8. *There roſe up a new King in Egypt that knew not Joſeph*, intimateth that it would have been an incredible thing that any King of *Egypt* knowing *Joſeph*, would have dealt ſo with his poſterity. And when

Benhadad

Benhadad is sent to by *Asa* to do him a kindnesse, *There is an ancient league* (saith he) *between my Father and thy Father*, 1 *Kings* 15. 19. Surely, if such pleas from parental relations work upon the bowels of *men*, the seed of *Gods* friends may be more confident that the like pleas will steed them with him, because he is of tenderer bowels then any creature can be, and more apt to take to heart such principles of ingenuity & good nature (if I may so expresse my self) then we are.

After. I fully assent to you in these particulars, that Gods Covenant with our parents is a good plea for faith to urge; but all this discourse supposeth the persons that are the urgers of it to be believers themselves; but what is this to *Infants* who cannot plead this Covenant, nor believe, and whom our present discourse concernes?

Pædo. Yes, very much, for it supposeth their *interest* in that Covenant before they could plead it, seeing they plead by *right of succession*: Now he that pleads a right of succession among men, supposeth he had a right before he could plead; so the Apostle speaking of the *heir under age*, who cannot legally sue for his estate, yet saith he, *he is Lord of all*, *Gal.* 4. 1. Surely had not the Covenant of God with the Fathers, here spoken of, concerned their posterity, even when they were born, they could never have pleaded a title to God of such antiquity when they came to years; besides, you must consider that I am now speaking of the advantage which the Covenant of God with fore-fathers, and his relation to them, as it undergoes an abstracted consideration from the personal Covenant with us by faith,

affords to the ſtrengthening of faith when we have it; that I may ſhew that we have good cauſe not to renounce our Infant-relation to Gods Covenant, which Anabaptiſts generally do.

After. But Sir, I remember you promiſed to lay the compariſon between the advantage, that the conſideration of *parental relation* to God gives to faith, and that which emergeth from *perſonal relation*; for ſuppoſe *David* plead the Covenant of *fore-fathers*, and *Jehoſhaphat* and others do ſo too; might they not with as much ſtrength of faith have pleaded Gods Covenant made with *themſelves* at the time of their converſion?

Pædo. I have anſwered you partly to that before, and ſay further here, They *could not*, becauſe they *did not*, I think is a good argument in this caſe; the Saints do not uſe to ſpeak vain and non-ſignificant words to God in prayer. Had they had ſo much hold upon God by the plea of *my God*, or *our God*, they would not (undoubtedly) have added alſo that of [*the God of their fathers*] Beſides, in reaſon judge you, Is it nothing when I can come to God and ſay, *Lord, there is an ancient Covenant between my fore-fathers and thee, and mutual friendſhip hath run in a line from many generations down to me as ſoon as I had a being; nay, thou waſt beſpoken on my behalf to be a friend to me before I was able to ſpeak for my ſelf, my godly father, a dear friend of thine, made many a motion on my behalf, he pleaded a Covenant entailed, he put it in ſuite for me when I was but a ſpan long, and he intruſted me upon that Covenant, and committed me to the ſociety of the faithful, as Guardians and Feoffees in truſt to ſee me poſſeſſed of it; and now (Lord) I am*

by their endeavours and thy blessing upon them, enstated therein: I have a great favour to ask at thy hands, and I question whether my own personal plea will carry it with that prevalency which I desire, I am many wayes unworthy to plead with thee mine own title; to fortifie it therefore, Lord look back upon the daies of old, & read over the petitions which are yet on file on my behalf, and thy gracious answers to them, when as yet my bones were only written in thy book. Let it never be said that one descended of such a prayerful race is cast out of thy favour, and the prayers of that race become unsuccessful to me, on whose behalf they were put up, and are upon the file in thy Court of Requests.

After. But may not one that is baptized at *years of discretion* plead all this, as well as one baptized in *Infancy*; (supposing the plea be well grounded)? Why then is this produced to shew the usefulness of Infant-Baptism above Baptism of riper age?

Pædo. I told you once before, that I am now shewing you the benefit of holding *the ground* of Infant-Baptism, to wit, a relation to God by the Covenant of our fore-fathers before we were born; which Anabaptists generally deny, as well as the practice of it; and I shall methodically descend to to the practise it self anon. However, because it may be needful for your satisfaction, now and then to be a little immethodical, I shall not deny you to interpose now and then what you apprehend may stumble you, and swallow the inconveniency for your advantage.

To answer you therefore to this question, although a believer when ever baptized, may make this plea as well as one baptized in Infancy (for

the fault of parents in this case is no prejudice to the child, in the substance of it) yet it is morally and rationally more conducing to the frequent bringing of it to *remembrance*, and (so) to the frequent *improvement of it*, to retain in the Church the practise of Infant-Baptism, because Infant-Baptism doth more peculiarly, and abstractly lead to the consideration of this Covenant of Ancestors, (which is the plea in hand) then Baptism at riper years doth; seeing that Covenant is the proper ground upon which it is administred; so that as often as a child is Baptized in my sight, or I reflect upon mine own Infant-Baptism, I cannot but so often reflect upon the Covenant of fore fathers, and have very warm occasional hints suggested to me thereby, for the improvement of it in the way aforesaid.

After. Hereby Sir, you mind me that there is one branch of your promise as to this particular behind, which you will give me leave to mind you of; you have shewed how the ground of Infant-Baptism conduceth to the furtherance of the actings of faith and have given some collateral evidence how the *practice* of it doth so too; I pray proceed in that Argument.

Pædo. I will, for indeed I longed to come to it long since, but that your dissatisfactions have delayed me, and therefore I shall the more willingly undertake it; but upon condition that you must not anew interrupt me in this discourse, with questions concerning the right of Infants to Baptism, or the Covenant of it in Infancy; seeing our discourse proceeds upon a *supposal* hereof (at least for discourse sake) for I shall not so far

for feit

forfeit my diſcretion as to diſpute whether that which is indeed no Ordinance, be not more effectual to ſtrengthen faith, then that that is ſo indeed, but let that lie between us. You ſay, or at leaſt queſtion, whether you may not ſay, that Baptiſm received at years of diſcretion, is the only Ordinance of Baptiſm. I ſay, that Infant-Baptiſm is no leſſe an Ordinance then that; I allow you to plead for your Baptiſm all that you can, ſuppoſing it be as you ſay; allow me (upon my ſuppoſition) to ſay what I can for my Baptiſm, and you ſhall be judge your ſelf, where the advantage in this iſſue lyes, on your ſide or mine.

Take your condition and proceed. *After. Pædo.*

Firſt then, (as to the ſtrengthning of Faith by the practiſe of Infant-Baptiſm (in *general*) the *object* of Baptiſmal faith is, *God in Covenant through the blood of Chriſt Sacramentally applyed in Baptiſm*, and by conſequence Faith, in relation to Baptiſm is to look upon that Covenant, and to fetch thence (with ſpecial reſpect to the ſecurity of that Seal adminiſtred to ſtrengthen it) all the benefits of the Covenant.

Secondly, (in *general* alſo) Faith in all its *acts* receiveth a ſpecial confirmation from *experience*; long acquaintance with a friend, and long relation to him, is a very great inducement to truſt him.

More *particularly*, ſeeing the matter of the covenant on Gods part in Baptiſm, (which Covenant is the object of Baptiſmal Faith) is ſuch as containes *ſpirituals* and *temporals*, we ſhall (as before) conſider them in their order; and if Infant-Baptiſme in both theſe afford ſuch arguments of corroboration to our faith, as I have

ſpoken of more then Baptiſm at riper years, then I hope I ſhall competently diſcharge this part of my undertaking alſo.

After. I expect what you will ſay.

Pædo. As to *ſpirituals* then, ſuch as, *remiſſion of ſins, renewing Grace, mortification of the old man, putting on of the new, ſupplies of Grace from the Fountain head the Lord Jeſus Chriſt* (all which are eminently comprized in the Baptiſmal Covenant) a man when he comes to years of diſcretion, may plead the Covenant for theſe, the more ſtrongly for his Infant-Baptiſm, *Lord didſt thou engage to beſtow theſe graces upon me in my Infancy, when I could not ask, nor ſo much as deſire them, and will the Lord not beſtow them upon me now I am a ſuitor for them? would he be found of me ſo far as to promiſe and ſeal a deed of gift conferring a right to theſe mercies when I ſought him not, and will he not be found of me, ſo as to confer poſſeſſion upon me when I ſeek him?*

And truly, for ſome of theſe graces, *viz. Initial graces*, ſuch as remiſſion of ſins, regeneration, and renovation of the heart, it hath made me very much a friend to Infant-Baptiſm, to conſider that Baptiſm is an *initial Sacrament*, to ſeal the beſtowing of theſe *initial graces* on Gods part; and therefore I verily perſwade my ſelf it was not only *intended* for Infants, but intended *principally* for them, ſeeing to elder perſons it could not ſo properly be a ſeal of conferring *initial grace* upon them, becauſe it ſuppoſeth that *already beſtowed on and wrought* in them as a qualification for the reception of that Ordinance: And although the generality of thoſe we read of in the

the new Teſtatament, were admitted to Baptiſm at that age, and it may ſeem that it reflects ſome diſparagement upon the wiſdome of God to appoint the uſe of ſuch an Ordinance to them to whom (being already converted) it was defective in one principal part of its ſignification and uſe, yet if we compare the ſtate of the Church then to be gathered, with the ſtate of the old Church when it begun in *Abram* and his family, we ſhall find God ordered it in the ſame manner in relation to the adminiſtration of the *Seal of admiſſion* then inſtituted. The generality of thoſe then admitted, being grown perſons, received the ſign of Circumciſion, though as defective to them in that part of its ſignification, which is ſuppoſed in the preſent caſe to be wanting in the Baptiſm of grown perſons: for Circumciſion no leſſe engages Gods Covenant for the collation of pardoning and regenerating grace, then Baptiſm doth, *Col.* 2. 11. 12.

And as for all *ſupplies of after-grace*, ſuch as the actual * aſſurance of pardon received, the actual mortification of luſts, and actual quickening of grace, againſt particular delayes and weakneſſes, the plea of Infant-Baptiſm is very prevalent; for although Baptiſm at riper age, ſeals the Covenant (as to theſe particulars) as well as Baptiſm in Infancy, yet doth it not give a like *moral aſſurance* of the conſtancy and firmneſſe of that part of it which confirms the people of God againſt fears of being deſerted by him, as the reception of it in Infant-age doth: for by the ſame reaſon upon which the Saints are many times faine to appeale from *conditional* promiſes and comforts

* Concerning Aſſurance, as it is promoted by Infant-Baptiſm, See a Treatiſe of the Athor lately publiſhed, concerning the *Spirit of Bondage, and Adoption.* And the *ſecond part* of this Dialogue, now firſt publiſhed.

to *absolute*, *viz.* The freeneſs of electing, juſtifying and renewing grace in the reſpective declarations, & offers of them; upon the ſame reaſon may they have recourſe to Infant-baptiſm, the moſt lively repreſentation & obſignation of both theſe.

Now we know that the Saints, when they look upon Gods engagements to give them comforting and preſerving grace, being told (as they are by that root of natural Arminaniſm that is in them) that God is engaged to beſtow them only upon ſuch and ſuch conditions, and being (withall) conſcious that they have failed, and ſtill fail in thoſe conditions; they have no relief in this caſe, but to fly to the records of the eternal love of God to them, and the freeneſs of juſtifying and renewing grace (as I ſaid before) and thence they conclude ſtrongly, that he who (when he fore-ſaw how unworthy they would prove of any favour from him, and how they would perpetually fail of their duty to him) did (yet) elect them, and beſtow grace and Chriſt upon them freely, will alſo now *heal their back-ſlidings, and love them* alike *freely* to the end, *Hoſ.* 14.4.

This therefore being their refuge, if Gods *ſeal* add (as it doth undoubtedly to us) any certainty to his word, then (ſurely) for ſuch perſons to reflect upon the ſeal of Baptiſm adminiſtred to them in Infancy, muſt needs fortifie them in that refuge; for in ſuch a caſe (me thinks) thus could I plead with God for perſeverance, and ſupplyes neceſſary thereunto.

Lord, the Covenant which thou madeſt with, and ſealedſt to me in Infancy, makes over all the graces & benefits of thy Covenant to me, not only the firſt, but

but the laſt, the ſeed of renewing, and the harveſt of preſerving and crowning grace; I am now told that though I have received the firſt, notwithſtanding any wants and obſtructions on my part; yet my own defects and weakneſſes, and ſins, may defeat me of the laſt, and ſo my latter end may be worſe then the beginning. Lord, didſt thou not ſee when thou madeſt this Covenant with me, that I was an Infant, wallowing in blood and pollution, the guilt & puddle of original ſin, having no good in me, nor capable of any, farther then thou ſhouldſt afterwards infuſe it by a new creation? ſurely thou didſt. And if thou didſt then ſee what I was, and fore-ſee what I would be, & yet wouldſt make and ſeal that Covenant to me notwithſtanding: ſhall I conceive that the falling out of what thou didſt fore-ſee can change thee from what thou art, and notwithſtanding that fore-ſight, didſt engage thy ſelf to be?

The like plea doth not offer it ſelf from the mediation of Baptiſm received at *riper age*, becauſe though the Covenant it ſeals be the ſame Covenant, and no leſſe free, yet the perſon to whom it is adminiſtred, is at the adminiſtration ſuppoſed to be under an *actual qualification, viz.* of *faith and repentance*; and therefore though he may draw the ſame ſupport and comfort from the Covenant, yet not from the Ordinance. And now (*neighbour*) what think you, hath not Infant-Baptiſm the advantage herein over baptiſm at riper years, to ſtrengthen faith upon Gods Covenāt for Spirituals?

After. I dare not determine ſo ſuddenly (Sir) in an argument ſo new to me as this is; but I conceive it deſerves ſerious conſideration, which (by Gods help) I ſhal beſtow upon it: in the mean time if you

have

have any thing more to add herein, I pray, go on therewithall.

Pado. I pray do, consider it throughly, for I propound it to that end, not for dispute, but for meditation; only, I desire you to take in one thing more with you, on this head, which I had almost forgotten.

After. What is that?

Pado. It is this, That Infant relation to God, yeilds a considerable strength to *faith in a tempted condition*, against those spiritual enemies, which seek to devour the soul therein; for here faith may apply it self to God thus.

Lord, Satan tells me I am one of his Subjects, a goat of his fold; but Lord, dost thou not know, that I have had thy sheep-mark upon me from a Lamb, that I was born in thy family, and solemnly owned for thy Subject and Servant, by the Minister in thy Name before the Congregation? wilt thou lose one that hath been thine so long? Kings use to be most tender of their Native Subjects, and Shepheards of the Sheep of their own race: shall thy native Subjects be more open to insolencies of enemies then subjects of other soveraigns are? and the Lambs yeaned in thy Flock more exposed to the wolf, then others brought in thither from another fold?

After. But Sir, doth difference of time make any alteration upon God, so as to lay upon him a greater obligation to one who hath been *longer* in his family, then to another who came more lately into it? I thought to the *Father of Eternity* there had been no difference between to day and an hundred years since.

So

So think I, but you are to remember that I now treat not of conſiderations prevailing with God, but conſiderations working upon us; not ſuch as further him in point of *faithfulneſs*, but ſuch as further *us* in point of *faith*. Now ſuch things may be of precious uſe to *us*, as are not of a like influence *upon God*: All the Arguments we urge in prayer do not at all move God, but only fortifie our faith to depend upon him. So here, though God have a like reaſon in himſelf to move him to take care of a ſoul that became one of his family but *yeſterday*, as of one that hath bin in his family *forty years* or upwards; yet it muſt needs be a more rational *encouragement to us* to depend upon him, *now* that we have been related *ſo long* to him, then it would be to have begun a relation but *yeſterday*. *Pæd.*

Well Sir, I ſhall hang up this upon the file alſo, among thoſe other heads which I mean to take time to look over more particularly; but I ſhal not hinder your preſent progreſs in the intended Argument. I pray you proceed to that part of it wherein you undertake the diſcovery of an advantage-ground for faith to act upon, in *Temporals* as well as *Spirituals*, within the Territories of *Infant-Baptiſm*. *After.*

I will, neighbour, (although I conceive that much of that labour is ſaved already, by proving it in *ſpirituals*; for it is an eaſie concluſion, and that which all *Scripture*, as well as *Reaſon* allows, to inferre the certainty of *Temporals* from *Spirituals*; the ſecurity we have for the *greater* is ſufficient for the *leſs*) go along with me therefore in a few words on this head. And I know not why *Pæd.*

why I ſhould not take the riſe of this argument from the example of *David*, whoſe faith (to me) ſeems to take its riſe from the ground we are ſpeaking of, *viz.* Gods Covenant-engagement to him in infancy (whereof Circumciſion then was, and Baptiſm now is, a confirming ſigne) The place is, *Pſalm* 22. 9,10,11. He begs for a temporal mercy, *deliverance from his enemies*, under whom he was ſo grievouſly afflicted, that he was therein *a ſi Type of Chriſt upon the croſs*, to whom therefore many paſſages of this Pſalm are applyed in the Goſpel. He urgeth many arguments of faith in this caſe, and among the chiefeſt, he pleads thus, *Lord, thou art he that took me out of the womb, thou didſt make me hope when I was upon my mothers breſts; I was caſt upon thee from the womb, thou art my God from my mothers belly; be not far from me &c.*

After. And what is there in all this? he ſeems to me to plead only from the experience of *providential preſervations* which he had had former experience of, even *from the womb*; but I ſee nothing in the Text from whence to conclude that he had (ſo much as in his eye) *any Covenant-relation* to God from *his mothers belly*, much leſſe, any *Seal of that Covenant*, adminiſtred to him then.

Pædo. Say you ſo? let me ſee then what I can make of it to the purpoſe in hand. You conceive *David* being a *Jew*, *was circumciſed the eight day*, as other Jews by the Commandement of God were.

After. Yes.

Pædo. Then ſurely he was in Covenant from that time, for *Circumciſion was the token of the Covenant*, Gen. 17.

Sup-

Suppose that, yet he may not plead that Covenant here. *After.*

Surely if he did not, yet it concerned him to do so (as I believe you also will grant, when you consider that *depth of misery* he was in, then which we cannot imagine a greater, and it concerned faith now to *muster up all its strength*) surely he was too wise to leave any of his most useful furniture behind him when he was to deal with such a tentation. This may be a probable Argument for my interpretation (at least) in general. *Pædo.*

But add to this (in particular)

One part of *Davids* complaint in this Psalm is, that *God his God hath forsaken him*, ver. 1. And indeed this stung him beyond all other his afflictions, and his enemies scoff at him for *rolling himself on the Lord*, ver. 8. reproaching him with his faith in God. Surely this will evince, that *David* in this Psalm addresseth himself to God, as his God, a God in Covenant with him, and begs for deliverance as a *Covenant-mercy*.

Now, reduce the plea he makes, *ver.* 9, 10. to this sense, and it will be impertinent and weak, if it be grounded *only* on *providential interest* in God from his *mothers womb*; for this were to make *David* argue with God at this rate, *Lord, why hast thou forsaken me?* that is, *why dost thou not shew me the favour that thou shewest to thy children? be not far from me*, that is, *give me a Covenant deliverance, I challenge thee on thy faithfulness to deliver me in this straight, according to my trust in thee; for thou hast* providentially, (to wit *upon the same account, upon which thou dost take care for the children of Pagans, & the yong callow-*

brood

brood of ravens, when they cry) taken me out of the womb, and caused me to hope when I was upon my mothers brests. Were not this (think you) a very forcible plea for *special* faith, to urge an Argument that takes its rise from a ground common to all Gods creatures? and would it any way follow (in reason) that God must not fail *Davids* trust now, because he had *providentially* preserved him *from his mothers belly*? Is God bound to preserve all those, nay, to shew special favour to them at all times of their lives when they have need of him, whom he thus breeds and preserves *from their mothers belly*?

The Argument therefore runs plainly thus, *Lord, thou art my God now upon the same title by which thou hast been from my mothers belly, &c. and thou hast the same obligations of the Covenant, by which thou wast my God then, upon thee now. I have found thee faithful to that Covenant hitherto, be so still. Will the God that hath been my God from the womb, and from my mothers belly forsake me now? will he break Covenant now, who hath kept it so long?* Thus the plea of *Davids* faith is like the Sun *going forth in its strength*, with light and warmth enough to chear his fainting spirits in this sad plunge, and *valley of the shadow of death.*

Now (neighbour) to reduce this example to our present business; Suppose I should be in any want, under any affliction or calamity whatsoever; would it not be worth the while to encourage faith in prayer by a like Argument.

Lord, I have been cast upon thee (by my Parents dedicating me to thee in baptism) from the womb,

and

and thou haſt (by ſealing a Covenant to me) been my God from my mothers belly, I was not without a ſufficient ground of hoping in thee when I hung upon my mothers breſt; for then I was taken into thy family, and became thy charge, and thou becameſt my Father and my God; and ever ſince, from that time to this, thou haſt on thy part held that Covenant inviolated, thou haſt given me grace in purſuance of it, and all other good things, and wilt thou not continue the ſame line of mercy and bounty to me all my daies? what? wilt thou who haſt holden me up from the womb, and been my truſt and hope from my youth, caſt me off now, though I am old and gray-headed, Pſa. 71.5,6,9. & 27.18? *Will not God take care for ancient Servants? will he provide the leſs for them becauſe their work is done, and they are grown children again, who took them into his family before they could work at all, and bred them from children therein?* Surely a ſerious heart knows the advantage of ſuch conſiderations too well to part with them ſlightly.

Is there not great odds between this plea, and the plea of another man, who can only (evidentially, I mean, and legally) urge a relation to Gods family for one, two, three, four, or a few more years? and ſure the plea of perſons baptized at years of diſcretion, muſt fall ſhort of that of *David* by divers years.

Yet ſtill, Sir, me thinks it ſticks with me, that had not *David* been *Circumciſed at eight dayes old*, he had had the *ſame plea*, & (by conſequence) a man not having been baptized in Infancy, may ſay all this which you ſpeak of, except you will deny any to be in the Covenant before they are Baptized *After.*

Baptized, or to have been heretofore in Covenant before they were circumciſed, and then you renounce your own ſureſt footing for Pædobaptiſm, and come home to the Anabaptiſts.

Pædo. I muſt anſwer you again, as I did before, that though every one that is a child of a believer, had formerly, and ſtill hath a Covenant-right to God before Circumciſion and Baptiſm; and ſo every ſuch perſon circumciſed or uncircumciſed, baptized or unbaptized, (at leaſt as long as the neglect is not his own fault) hath the *ſame plea* which we have been ſpeaking of, yet he hath it not to urge with the *ſame evidence* and ground of *aſſurance*, as he that can plead the Covenant with the ſeal, hath: and ſo ſtill (as to that I am ſpeaking of, the footing of faith in ſuch a caſe) he comes ſhort of my *David*, or *believer*, who in his Infancy was not only *in Covenant*, but a *ſealed Covenanter*; otherwiſe it muſt needs follow, that the Sacraments add nothing at all to the Covenant in point of *certainty* and *evidence*, which I think no ſober Chriſtian will affirm. Wherefore I pray you carry this explication and diſtinction along with you through the remaining part of our diſcourſe, and apply it, *mutatis mutandis*, changing the terms as there ſhall be cauſe, as often as you ſee a like doubt ariſing in you, that we may avoyd needleſſe repetitions, as much as is poſſible.

After. I will Sir, as I ſhall be able, and when I do not, it ſhall be enough for you to mind me of it, and I will correct my ſelf for adding any unneceſſary trouble to you in that kind. I pray therefore proceed to ſhew the ſame advantage adminiſtred

to

to *other graces* in their actings from Infant-Baptiſm, as you have done in reference to *Faith* already; wherein I aſſure you (though I am not yet beyond ſome doubt as to ſome things you have ſaid by the way, whereof I may put you to the trouble of giving a further ſatisfaction another time, yet) I have received ſuch *props of faith*, as I hope I ſhal upō occaſion make very good uſe of, & if you can ſhew me as much in other graces, I ſhal not look ſo very ſlightly upon Infant-Baptiſm as ſome, through *careleſſneſs* and ſpiritual *negligence*, not looking into it as they ſhould, & *others* through the *prejudice* of a contrary judgment, do.

I proceed therefore to a ſecond grace (wherein if I do not give in as large evidence to the uſefulneſſe of Infant-Baptiſm, as in reaſon you can expect, I ſhall be doubly to blame, *partly* for failing in mine undertaking, and *partly* for hazarding the ſucceſſe of ſo good a work begun in you, as you give me hope of, *viz.* your full ſatisfaction) and that grace is *Pædo.*

II. *Repentance*, or *godly ſorrow for ſin*, with the attendants of it, *humiliation, caution.*

As to ſorrow and *humiliation*, there is this twofold ground advanced from Infant-Baptiſm. (1) From the *kindneſſe of God*, ſhewed to the parties therein, and that upon a double account.

1. As Infant-Baptiſm reflecteth upon him under the conſideration of the *God of our fathers*. And this hath ſo much prevalency in it to draw penitent tears from an ingenuous heart (and grace is a principle of greateſt ingenuity) that the Saints of God in their moſt ſolemn humiliations inſiſt very much upon it. Thus when

Nehemiah begins a ſolemn confeſſion of ſin, he aggravates it by *Gods mercies to Abraham, and their fore-fathers*, for a great part of the chapter, *Neh.*9. And God himſelf frequently aggravates *Iſraels* ſin, by this conſideration, *They forſook the God of their Fathers*, 2 Chron. 7.22,& 24,24, 28, 6. & 30,7.

2 As it reflects upon the mercy of our own *perſonal relation to God in Infancy*. And, ſurely when God aggravates the ſin of his people *Iſrael*, *Ezek.*16. under the ſimilitude of a *child* taken into his ſpecial care from the very womb, he layes a ſufficient ground for the deducing of this concluſion; *That for any perſon or people, ſo related to God from Infancy, as he there expreſſeth to depart from God by ſinning againſt him, is a very great aggravation of ſin.* Nay, I have ſome ground to think that the Lord takes the riſe of that aggravation of that Nations ſins from the very mercy of national circumciſion; for (to my mind) *ver.* 8. ſpeaks much to that purpoſe, but I lay no great weight upon that; only I will be more bold (upon the former ground) to draw up a parallel endictment from the chapter againſt a particular Jew circumciſed in Infancy, and then bring it down to the preſent caſe. Suppoſe God therefore pleading againſt any ſinner of the Jews Nation in the ſtrain of that chapter, and you will ſee it yield as great aggravations of *perſonal* ſins as *national*.

Thou N. *in the day in which thou waſt born was naked, and in thy blood, utterly naked and deſtitute of original righteouſneſs, and defiled with the ſtain and guilt of original ſin, an object of loathing and*

ab-

abhorrency to a pure and holy God as I am; yet when I paſſed by thee, and ſaw thee polluted in thine own blood, I ſaid, unto thee when thou waſt in thy blood, live; yea, I ſaid unto thee, when thou waſt in thy blood, live: when I paſſed by thee and looked upon thee, behold! (and wonder at my goodneſs therein) thy time (even that time) *was a time of love, and I ſpread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedneſs; yea, I ſware to thee* in circumciſion, *and entred into covenant with thee*, ſaith the Lord, *and thou becameſt mine, and I waſhed thee with water*, &c. *and I bred thee at my coſt*, under my Ordinances, *from that day, yet haſt thou forgotoen all this kindneſs, and rebelled againſt me.* Alter the word *Circumciſion*, into *Baptiſm*, and make the application to your ſelf, and then ſee whether it doth not afford a cutting aggravation of ſin. Anabaptiſm yields no ſuch aggravation of ſin, for it allows no man any ſpecial relation to God, no Covenant, no engaging Ordinance, no peculiar Covenat-mercy, till actual faith, *i. e.* till years of diſcretion. The ſins of thoſe who are born within the Church, to the Anabaptiſt have no other aggravations then the ſins of meer Heathens, till they come to believe.

(2.) A ſecond ground of *humiliation* from Infant-Baptiſm, is from the conſideration of the *Apoſtacy*, that (upon that account) is in the bowels of every ſuch perſons ſin, as was then admitted into Covenant with God. And me thinks, I may to very good purpoſe write bitter things againſt *ſins of youth*, upon this ground, *Ah wretch! did God enter thee in his ſchool, nay, admit thee into his family from a child, did he in much mercy*

make thee a Covenanter with himself, and when thou couldst not engage for thy self, did he accept of thy parents & sureties engagement on thy behalf? hath he ever since looked upon thee as a Covenanter, and dealt with thee as a friend? and yet (for all this) *thou hast no sooner been able to speak or go, but thou hast spoken lies against him, and gone astray from him; yea, since thou hast been capable of understanding thy way, thou hast contrary to the duty of thy natural Allegiance, entred into a contrary Covenant, and confederacy with the Devil and Death, and thine own lusts, and maintained a War with this God, with abundance of youthful heat and activity; all the blood and spirits that run through thy youthful veines have boiled against him. O sinner! remember whence thou art fallen, and repent, and renew thy Covenant with God, before by more rivetted and aggravated Apostacies thou provoke him to cast thee out of his Covenant altogether, and deale with thee as thou hast dealt with him.* Now the Anabaptist hath no such consideration to aggravate sinnes of youth *before actual faith or Baptism*, seeing he ownes no such obligation to God till *personal* covenanting at a mans conversion or Baptism, or both, at years of discretion.

And now I speak of *conversion at years of discretion*, me thinks, the consideration of ones Baptismal Covenant in Infancy, should much promote it, when a man considers the *seasonableness* of it, the mercy vouchsafed in it, (and that *preventing*, which consideration adds much to mercy) and a mans own provoking *apostacies* from it, in my judgement there is much to be said from

from hence to advance actual converſion.

After. But Sir, I cannot ſee the reaſon of this aggravation of ſinne, that it is an Apoſtacy from a Covenant which I am only engaged in, by the *interpretation* or *acceptation* of another. Infants do not *perſonally* covenant with God, how then can after-ſins, be charged upon them as *Apoſtacies*?

Pædo. I anſwer you in a word, becauſe the *Covenant* then undertaken on their behalf, and ſealed upon their perſons in Baptiſm, is no other then what became a duty incumbent upon them, as ſoon as they had a being. For (according to our principles which I am to ſuppoſe (you know) in this comparative diſcourſe) God is in covenant with an Infant as ſoon as he is a living child in the womb; and God is Sacramentally and ſolemnly engaged to him in Baptiſm as ſoon as he is born; now all Covenants of this nature do ſuppoſe a duty of *reſtipulation* or *repromiſſion* on our part. That then which by duty, ſuch a child owes to God, is by a kind of *gracious prolepſis*, (ſeeing he cannot doe it in his own perſon) accepted on his behalf, by his parents or ſureties, that ſo (for want of ſigning the Covenant on both parts) he be not cut off from the benefits of the Covenant, for ſo long time as he ſhall continue under age; and he is afterwards to take this as a *great addition* of mercy, that God dealt ſo graciouſly with him, and that (in right of ſuch a preventional Covenant) he hath had ſo long a ſtanding in the viſible Church, as a member of that body, under the ſpecial eye and care and prayers of that ſociety; which (ſurely)

is no ſmall mercy. And ſo you ſee that that very thing which you except againſt the former diſcourſe doth very much ſtrengthen it.

After. I confeſſe upon your grounds it doth ſo, I pray therefore proceed (in the next place) to the advantage which Infant-Baptiſm brings to the promoting of holy *caution* and watchfulneſſe againſt ſin for time to come; the other part of *Repentance.*

Pædo. My buſineſſe herein is very much prevented by what hath been ſaid upon the former head; for undoubtedly what promotes godly *ſorrow* for ſins paſt, muſt needs be a ſpecial *Antidote* againſt ſin for the future; and yet if you pleaſe (for evidence ſake) we will recollect the former conſiderations, and charge them home once more, to do execution *forwards* as well as *backwards*, againſt ſin for time to *come*, as well as for time *paſt*. *Luther* tells us a ſtory of a Virgin that was wont to reſiſt temptations with this anſwer, *Baptizata ſum, I am Baptized*, (Satan) *and being waſhed, ſhall I with the ſow wallow in the mire again?* I confeſſe, this is a prevalent caution from the *general* conſideration of Baptiſm, but I am much miſtaken if it conclude not more forcibly, when ſtrengthned with this *ſpecial* circumſtance of the time of the Adminiſtration which we are now handling. Thus, *Shall I ſin againſt an ancient friend, mine and my fathers God? Shall I ſell the inheritance of my fathers?* 1 Kin. 21. 3, 4. *Forſake my fathers friend.* Prov. 27. 10. *Shall I break an old Covenant ſtruck with God from the cradle? Shall I now forſake my Maſter in whoſe houſe I was born, and admitted to the priviledges of his family*

family as ſoon as I was born? Shall I now be reconciled to ſin, to which I was a ſworn enemy from my mothers breſt? God did me the greateſt kindneſs I was capable of in my Infancy, and what wrong hath he done to me ſince that time, that I ſhould now entertain a motion of unfaithfulneſs to him? God hath been my maſter theſe fourſcore years (ſaid old *Policarpus*) *and he hath all this while done me no hurt, and ſhall I forſake him now?* Surely all the *arrows* in the *quiver* of Anabaptiſm will not pierce ſo deep into the heart of a tentation, as this will.

By this time, I hope, I have performed my undertaking in this part alſo, concerning *Repentance*; and what is ſaid in theſe two graces, *faith* and *repentance*, I ſhall not need to tell you that all *other graces* of the Spirit are deeply concerned in, ſeeing they all fight under their banners, either by way of *influence*, or *concomitance*, or *conſequence*; ſo that I think it needleſſe labour to inſtance in more, except your diſſatisfaction require it; for the ſake whereof I ſhall not think it loſt labour to repeat what hath been ſaid over and over, but upon any other account I ſhall not think it neceſſary to enlarge.

After. Sir, I am, I conceive, able to ſave you the labour of what you have *to ſay*, from what you *have ſaid*; and therefore am very willing to give your diſcourſe a diſmiſſion from this head of the *improvement of graces* from the principles and practiſe of Infant-Baptiſm: As I remember it yet remains that you ſay as much in reference to the *duties of a new life*, as you have concerning the graces.

I confeſs, that part of my task is yet behind, but I hope I ſhall diſpatch that too, with the more eaſe, out of the proviſions I have already laid in for it in the former part of our diſcourſe. In a word then,

Duties of a new life are either

1. Such, as *directly, primarily*, and *immediately* terminate in God.
2. or ſuch as *mediately, ſecondarily*, and *indirectly* reſpect him.

Of the *former* ſort are all *duties of Religion*, ſtrictly ſo called, duties of the *firſt Table*.

Of the *latter* ſort are *duties of Relation*, duties of the *ſecond Table*.

[*Firſt*,] Concerning *Duties of the firſt Table*, exerciſes of practical godlineſſe, and ſuch as concern the immediate ſervice of God, ſurely it was no *idle phraſe* which the Apoſtle *Paul* uſed, when he gives an account of the manner of his life before *Felix*, in theſe termes, *after the manner which they call Hereſie, ſo ſerve I the* [*God of my fathers*] Act. 24. 14 & when *Iſrael* ſings a ſong of praiſe to God, the title they give God, is the ſame, *He is* [*my fathers God*] *and I will exalt him*, *Exod.* 15. 2. which is (to me) an expreſſion of a more then ordinary *Emphaſis*, becauſe it is added to [*my God*,] *He is* [*my God*] *and I will prepare him an habitation; He is* (*moreover*) [*my Fathers God*,] *and I will exalt him*. Surely theſe holy men thought themſelves obliged to ſerve and worſhip God (beyond others) upon the account of that *Hereditary* relation to God, which the grounds of our Infant-Baptiſm hold forth (as is before declared) and thoſe of Anabaptiſm

tiſm deny. *Born Heathens*, though God were (it may be) very *providentially* gracious to their *Fathers*, yet when they are converted, never call him their *Fathers God*, but this is a phraſe peculiar to thoſe that are *born in the Church*, and ſo an obligation lying upon them beyond others, to ſerve him. A ſtrain of like nature is that expreſſion of *Davids*, Pſal. 116. 16, 17. *O Lord I am thy ſervant, I am thy ſervant*, doubly thy ſervant, becauſe upon a double obligation, by *perſonal covenant*, and *natural relation*, as being the *ſon of thy hand maid*, born in thy houſe, and upon that account thine by the *Law*, *Exod.* 21. 4. wherein the children of a *ſervant* are her *maſters*. And from this obligation he reſolves upon duty, *ver.* 17, 18, 19.

And then, as to *perſonal title* to God from *infancy*, I hope ſuch meditations as theſe have now and then done *me* good, and poſſibly they may do *you* no leſſe, in quickening and exciting to Duty. *Soul! How comes it to paſſe, that thou doeſt ſo little, ſo ſlightly, for God? Art thou grown weary of thy old maſter? ſurely, he hath deſerved better at thy hands, then that thou ſhouldeſt be ſo remiſſe in ſervice, now thou haſt age, and underſtanding to ſerve him, who took thee into his houſe and family, and made thee partaker of the priviledges, and proviſions of it, many years before thou couldſt do any thing for him; From thy infancy to thy ripe age (if not longer) he was at the charge of keeping thee, and had never a jot of ſervice from thee. Is it no mercy, that he, ſo good a maſter, did not leave thee to thine own choice, uningaged, till thou waſt of age to chooſe whom thou wouldſt ſerve? ſurely,*

ſurely, if there be any advantage in his ſervice, (as thou knoweſt, there is more then thou canſt imagine) how happy waſt thou in ſuch a maſter, as ſecured thee from the hazardous choice of thine own corrupt heart, by laying his bonds upon thee, before thou hadſt diſcretion enough to make thy own election, for fear thou ſhouldſt (as thou waſt naturally too prone) chooſe amiſſe. Bleſſe the Lord, O my ſoul, and all that is within me bleſſe his holy name, for Infant-Baptiſm, if upon no other account, yet upon this, that God engaged thee to the profeſſion of his name therein, before thou didſt arrive at thoſe years of diſcretion, wherein (poſſibly) hadſt thou been then at thy liberty, thou mighſt have been a diſcreet Atheiſt, and having once found the ſinful ſweets of liberty, mighteſt have thought it wiſdom to have continued it, and have lived ſtill without God in the world. And ſerve this God willingly, who (to thy advantage) made thee then his ſervant without thy will, that thou mighteſt (when thou cameſt to underſtand that advantage) ſerve him with the more entireneſs of will, for ſo dealing with thee. And that thou mayeſt be the more wrought upon by the conſideration of this preventing mercy: theſe times ſhew thee, in abundance of ſad examples, how evill a thing it is, to be left to chooſe a mans way by his own diſcretion; ſeeing thou daily ſeeſt, thoſe whom Satan hath ſo far prevailed withall, as to renounce the obligation they had to God in Infant-Baptiſm, and thereupon to conceit themſelves in the liberty of their own choice, running through all forms (as they call them) that is, all wayes that pretend to any thing of Religion, till at laſt they end in down-right Atheiſm, and pro-

profeſſe themſelves to be nothing at all. Seeing therefore it is better with thee (which in a great part thou oweſt to thy Infant-engagement to God) let it not ſeem grievous to thee to perform thy duty to this God, thy God, thy Father, and the guide of thy youth, Jer. 3. 5. I pray (neighbor) try the opperation of ſuch meditations, upon your ſoul now, and then, and I am verily perſwaded, you will love your Infant-Baptiſm the better for it, the longeſt day you live.

After. I will, Sir, I aſſure you when I come home, upon your recommendation. In the mean time, I pray you ſhew me how Infant-Baptiſm enforceth upon a man the duties he owes to others, and to God by them: the duties of the *ſecond Table*.

Pædo. [*Secondly*,] Therefore all others ſtand in relation to us either,

- *Oeconomically*, or,
- *Politically*——and ſo either
  - upon a *Church-account*, as fellow-*Chriſtians*.
  - or upon a *civil account*, as
    - fellow-men and women, or fellow ſubjects.

[*Firſt*,] As to *Oeconomical* or family-relations. Infant-Baptiſm being founded upon *family-relation*, as it is, being grounded upon a Covenant derived from the *head of a Family* (being a believer) unto all in the *family* (as in the right of *Abraham* to all his) ſurely, muſt needs be a firmer obligation to *family-duties* in thoſe mutual relations. And no queſtion, *Abraham* being honoured by God ſo far as to be made the *root* from whence the *ſap* of ſuch an honour, and pri-

draw

viledge, was to be derived unto his family, did draw no ſmall incitement & encouragement from thence to propagate the knowledg, and fear of God to them, *to command his children, and his houſhold after him to keep the way of the Lord*, *Gen.*18.19.that ſo he might make ſome anſwerable return to God,by procuring that ſervice from them to him, which ſuch an extraordinary priviledge called for.And every *head of a Family* being (by our principles)*an Abraham* to his Family, no doubt but ſuch as make conſcience of *walking in the ſteps of their father Abraham*, will make the ſame uſe of that favour which he did.

But more particularly, as to the relation between *Parents and children*, in which relation (principally) this priviledg is derived) there is a mutual conſcience of duty, eaſily deduced from the principles and practiſe of Infant-baptiſm, wch the contrary principles & practiſes do not afford.

I. *From Parents to Children.* Parents hence ſee ground:

[1.] *To make conſcience of making their Children Gods.*

(1.) Partly, *By an external Covenant*, not denying them that priviledge which is in their power to conveigh to them: nor cutting off that *entail* which they themſelves, with ſo much advantage (above others who are born Heathens) received from their Anceſtors. It is no wonder if they who know not the value and uſe of their own Infant-Baptiſm, and what a mercy themſelves received in it, do make no conſcience, nor ſcruple to cut off their poſterity from it. He that knowes, or believes an Eſtate not worth

worth the enjoying, will not care whether the *entail* to his poſterity be firm or no. But he that knows it to be of conſiderable value, will (out of natural affection) not *cut it off*; nay, rather, if it be weak, he will corroborate it as much as he can. And thus it is with a godly man of Pædobaptiſts principles. He thinks with himſelf, what a mercy it was to him to be a Covenanter with God, by Baptiſm in Infancy, and ſurely, ſaith he, I will not be ſuch a Monſter in the pedigree of *my poſterity*, that any one ſhal have cauſe to ſay hereafter, *in ſuch an one was broken off the line of Covenant-relation to God in ſuch a family; ſuch an one entituled all his poſterity to heatheniſm, and did his utmoſt endeavour to deſtroy the ſucceſſion of the viſible Church in his poſterity.*

(2.) And partly, *by an internal and ſaving Covenant*. Such an one, as hath in the preſence of God and his Church, *preſented* his children to God, and *challenged* the ratification of Gods Covenant to his poſterity, by baptiſm; will think himſelf obliged to make them Gods, (as indeed he is hereby) upon a firmer tie then otherwiſe he would be.

1. Whether out of *thankfulneſſe* to God. *Hath God vouchſafed me* (will ſuch a Parent ſay) *the priviledg of conveighing this honour to my poſterity, and made them partakers of a Church-relation to himſelf by my means, and ſhall I not ſo educate them, as they may hereafter walk anſwerably to ſuch a mercy, that they may not make God aſhamed to call them children hereafter; who is not aſhamed to be called their Father now?*

2. Or out of *conſcience* of his ſolemn promiſe in the face of the Congregation, having made a deed

deed of gift, and ſealed it in *open Court* (as I may ſay) whereby he hath ſolemnly made over his Children even from the Cradle, and dedicated them to God. *Lord* (ſaith he) *thy vows are upon me, thy vows are upon me; I will pay my vows unto thee* (which I have made) *in the preſence of all thy people. Thou and thy Church hath admitted my Child, as a viſible member of the body of Chriſt, upon my claim and undertaking: And ſhall I falſifie my truſt unto* God *and his Church, and deceive their expectations? ſhall I by my negligence in my Duty, of chatechiſing, inſtructing, correcting, exemplary walking, do my endeavour to make my own deed of no effect. What a cheat, what a fraudulent conveyance would that be? And the more abominable, becauſe of the parties concerned in it,* God *and his Church, who (of all others in the world) ſhould not be thus mocked.* I need not tel you that ſuch conſiderations as theſe, if duly ſet home by a ſerious conſcience, may make even an *ungodly Profeſſor*, conſcientious in his duty towards his little ones, which no other cords could ever bind him unto.

Pſa. 116. 14, 18.

Now compare this with the *contrary principles and practiſe*, and you will eaſily ſee, that the Anabaptiſt is no way ſo much engaged, by his grounds and way, to take care of his Children, but only by the *common tie* of natural affection, and the *general obligation* of the Commandement of God; which (although very ſtrong bonds in themſelves, yet) becauſe of the ſluggiſhneſſe, and backwardneſſe, and untowardneſſe of mens hearts (even the beſt) need ſome more particular, and ſpecial additions of perſonal engagements to fortifie

tifie them. And therefore it is, that (though the common duty of religion, be in it ſelf, ſufficiently obliging, yet) Saints in all ages have laid *vows* upon themſelves; and the more *ſolemn and publick* thoſe vows have been, the more have they accounted them obliging; (as the caſe of *David* before named, *Pſal.* 116. 14.) and alſo engaged themſelves to the conſideration of the many *perſonal* obligements God hath laid upon them, as an *additional* quickning to the performance.

(2.) And (as Infant-baptiſm engageth the *Parents of Infants* ſo baptized, *to make them Gods*, ſo) in the next place, it affords them a large *ground of faith to pray for them*, that they may be ſo; *and to believe* (except they declare the contrary afterwards) that they are ſo.

Think therefore, how may a godly Parent *plead* the Covenant on the behalf of his child *in ſpirituals*, even when a little one, eſpecially when his title hath been allowed by God himſelf (in the perſons of his *Miniſter* and *Church*) at his Baptiſm? *Now* (Lord) *I will be bold to ſpeak a word or two in thine ears, on the behalf of my child, ſeeing thou haſt not been aſhamed to own him and me, in the face of thy Church; Thou haſt marked my child for a Lamb of thine own fold; Lord wilt thou give empty ſignes? art thou not bound to make good the writings which thou ſealedſt to thy people, if they plead them? Lord, my child is of a wolviſh nature, wilt not thou who haſt put thy ſheep-mark upon him, make him a ſheep. Lord, thou haſt put Chriſt on him ſacramentally,* Gal. 3. 27. *Help him to put on Chriſt ſavingly: help him to put off the body of the ſins of the fleſh, to be buried with Chriſt,* Col. 2. 11.

and

and to rise with him, Rom. 9. 1, 2, 3. And I think, in relation to *temporals*, a godly Father may take the same advantage of this sealed Covenant, to plead on the behalfe of his Child. *Lord, I have little or nothing to leave to my Child*, (may a poor Saint say) *yet, in that thou hast taken him into thy Family, I count him well provided for. God and the Covenant of grace are an ample portion.* Surely, (to my judgment) there is more to this purpose in that prayer of *Abraham* for *Ishmael*, then we usually take notice of. O *that Ishmael* (saith he) *might live in thy sight*, Gen. 17. 18. God had in that very Chapter, told *Abraham*, that he would *establish his Covenant with him and his seed*, v. 7. and by way of addition had promised him seed of *Sarah*. v. 15, 16. *Abraham* admiring the goodnesse of God in the promise of *Isaac*, (which to him, being 100 years old, and to his wife *Sarah*, being 90. appeared an extraordinary mercy) and apprehending that *Isaac and his posterity* were to be the inheritors of that Covenant to the exclusion of *Ishmael*; (as a tender Father) improves the general Engagement of the Covenant to plead for him also. Q. D. *Lord, thou hast made a Covenant with me and my seed, which Covenant, though it seem to be limited to my seed in* Isaac, *yet* (Lord) Ishmael *is of my seed too, and so within the Covenant, and upon that account, under a capacity of Circumcision. O let not him be disinherited altogether by the substitution of Isaac in his stead. Is not Covenant-mercy large enough for* Isaac *and* Ishmael *too? O that* Ishmael *might live in thy favour too.* And God answers him, even concerning *Ishmael*, as

to

to the *temporal* mercies of the Covenant, *ver.* 20. though his Covenant as to the Church-part, the *spiritual* part were *established with Isaac.*

Yea, but Sir, (to my minde) *Abraham* seems to put up that prayer for *Ishmael*, upon an *unbelieving account*; desiring, that (seeing it was so unlikely a thing that he should *have seed by Sarah*) the Covenant might be performed to *Ishmael*, who was already in being: And it is as if he said, *Lord, I am out of hopes of an Isaac, wherefore if thou wilt be a God in Covenant to me and my seed, let* Ishmael *be that seed.* *After.*

Suppose this, yet it makes (nevertheless) to my purpose, which is to shew, *how Godly Parents may improve the Covenant, on the behalf of their seed.* But I conceive rather the *former sense* to be most proper to the place; because the Apostle acquits *Abraham* from any touch of *unbelief*, in the promise concerning *Isaac Rom.* 4. 19. Nay, he sets him out as an admirable pattern of faith in that very particular, by shewing, what *Abraham* might have pleaded for unbelief, from the *decrepitness of his own body, and the deadness of* Sarahs *womb*; which yet (saith he) *he considered not, nor staggered through unbelief, but gave glory to God.* *Pædo.*

Be it as you say. But do not the *Anabaptists principles* yield them this plea on the behalf of their Children also? *After.*

No; for they deny any such Covenant between God and their seed, till they come to plead it themselves at *years of discretion.* For if they granted this Covenant, and that so visible (as to the persons whom it concernes) that it might be pleaded for them, they could not deny *Pædo.*

them Baptiſm; for being *viſibly* in Covenant with God, who can juſtly deny them the Seal of that Covenant. To this (as I remember) I have ſpoken at large before, and therefore refer you thither for fuller ſatisfaction. And (from my experience) carry this along with you: That *I know divers in the Land, who (to this day) acknowledge their Engagements to their godly Anceſtors, for pleading the Covenant on their behalf, when they were not able to plead it for themſelves.*

After. But I pray Sir, what meant you a while ſince, when you told me that godly Parents, from the baptiſm of their children in infancy, have a *large ground to believe, that thoſe Children are Gods Children, till they declare the contrary?*

Pædo. I underſtand it, concerning their Children, who die in infancy (before they arrive at ſuch years, in which by a wicked and ungodly converſation, they declare that they were never Gods otherwiſe then by an external Covenant, as *Iſhmael* did) concerning them my (not only opinion, but) ſtrong perſwaſion and aſſurance is, that their Parents are bound to draw a comfortable Argument from their Baptiſme to their ſalvation, and that they have good ground ſo to do. Concerning which I have diſcourſed at large already. Only, I ſhall deſire you at preſent (ſuppoſing that the Lord is in Covenant, and that Covenant ſealed in Baptiſm, with the Infant-ſeed of believers) to anſwer me, *did God ever break Covenant with any, who did not break with him firſt?*

After. No ſurely, *Gods Covenant is never defective.* All thoſe who being in external Covenant with God,

God, do not annul it by their own wickedneſſe, ſhall find it fulfilled to all intents and purpoſes.

Pædo. And can Infants in Infant-age commit any ſuch wickedneſſe, as may annul it? (for as for original ſin, God took them into a Covenant under the pollution of that, with a *non-obſtante.*)

After. No ſurely.

Pædo. Then (by your own grant) I have my concluſion. To wit, that *there is ſufficient ground, and therefore it is a duty to believe their ſalvation, dying in Covenant with God in Infant-years.*

After. But have not the Anabaptiſts as good ground to believe the ſalvation of their Infants when they die in Infancy, though unbaptized, and under no ſuch Covenant?

Pædo. No ſurely. No more then they may have concerning a *Turks*, or an unconverted *Indians* Child. For that which gives any viſible hopes of ſalvation to any man concerning another, is his viſible ſtanding in the Covenant of God. For to be an *Alien to the Covenants of promiſe*, is to be *without hope*, *Eph.*2.12. ſo that I may (without breach of charity) ſay concerning all the Children of Heathens, dying in infancy, *They are taken into the hands of God, who indeed may (for any thing I know) ſave them* by prerogative, and an undiſcovered depth of mercy; *but he hath afforded me no ground, ſo much as to hope, that any of them are ſaved, becauſe the Statute-Law of the Kingdom, doth not extend ſavation beyond the Covenant.* Now an Anabaptiſts faith concerning the Infants of believing Parents, even his own, puts them into the ſame *irrelative* condition (as to God, and the Covenant) with the

Children of Infidels, and (by consequence) under the same hopelessnesse of salvation. Now let tender Parents consider, who undoubtedly would think it a sad thing to *bring forth Children to the destroyer*, what sad principles the contrary principles are, by and according to which, they must kisse their beloved babes, when they are a dying with that sad farwel, which the dying Heathen gave his departing soul.

Animula, vagula, blandula, &c.

Alas, my poor prety babe, what place art thou now going to? Heaven, I have no grounded hope thou wilt be admitted into, except by an unusual favour of God, which was yet never heard to have been extended to any: and hell, I tremble to think it should be filled ever the fuller from my bowels. O happy, happy are the wombs that bear not, and the brests that never gave suck: How much better were it never to have Children, then have them a few minutes, and then part with them for ever upon such uncertainties! This is all the hope thy disconsolate Mother can have, in the losse of that earthly comfort which she expected from thee, that thy early death addeth those dayes to thee in heaven, which it denyeth thee on earth; and that I part with thee now, to meet thee again hereafter in Abrahams bosome. But alas, this Doctrine tells me, that those hopes are all of them Castles in the ayre, a building without a foundation, and thou and those must be buried in the same grave.

After. Truly Sir, this is *sad Doctrine*, and I think enough to reclaim my wife from her strong inclinations to that way, if she once understand that

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it hazards the ſhutting all her Children dying in Infancy out of heaven.

Pædo. No wonder, if women, when they underſtand it, be juſtly ſenſible of the ſadneſſe of it; for ſurely their ſhare in the qualms, and paines, and throwes, of breeding and bearing chidren, renders them more affectionate then Fathers can be. Wherefore I wonder, that ſo many of that ſex ſhould be daily ſeduced to that Doctrine. But I am reconciled to them upon this account, that I believe they do not ſee the conſequences of thoſe principles, which they profeſſe; and ſo do maintain thoſe hopes ſtill, though they deſtroy the grounds of them? and (ſutably to the Logick of the weaker ſex,) hold the concluſion, though they deny the premiſes.

After. I aſſure you Sir, I will endeavour to make my wife underſtand it, and do indeed heartily thank you for it. For I aſſure you, (though I have had perſonal conferences with others of that way, yet) moſt of the prejudices which I have had againſt that Doctrine which you profeſſe, I have received from her. Being loath to intrench upon her conſcience, in baptizing our Children without her conſent, I diſputed it with her as well as I could, upon what grounds I had taken up from ordinary diſcourſe; but I was not ſo well ſtudied in the point, nor ſo well inſtructed as ſhe was, and therefore thought fit to let her have her way, and complied with her in ſome meaſure. But now, I hope, by Gods bleſſing, and the help of your grounds to renew the debate, and poſſibly God may give us both underſtanding, in a buſineſſe of ſuch a practical influ-

ence, to go hand in hand, in the right way.

Pædo. I pray God you may; and I believe the more you think on these things, the more you will be inclind to a good esteem of your old principles, and the use of them, which you now understand better then you did before. And I shall dismisse you to the practice of your good intendments, when I have furnished you with two or three considerations more, which I remember, remain to be dispatched according to the method proposed. To wit, concerning the engagement which our principles lay upon *Children to Parents.*

After. I pray you Sir, let me not depart from you uninformed in any particular which you think necessary to instruct me in.

Pædo. You Chatechize your children, do you not?

After. I did a while since Sir, till I began to think it was to no purpose to baptize them, and then I conclude also, it was of as little use to catechize them, till they came to years of discretion; seeing I conclude that their ignorance, and incapacity to understand what they did, rendered them alike unfit for the one as for the other. Besides, I looked upon both as things, wch at the present would be either profaned by their ignorance, or breed them up in a meer form of godlinesse.

Pædo. I thought principles of Anabaptism might easily be improved to such a neglect of childrens education; and now I find it too true in you. But *friend*, I pray you consider that good Christians in all ages, have laboured to season the heads of their little ones with principles of Religion, even as *Eunice* and *Lois* taught *Timothy* the

Scri-

Scriptures from a ſucking Child (as the word ſignifies, 2 *Tim.*1.5. & 3. 15. And that 'tis Gods command, that you ſhould *train up a little Infant-Child* (by degrees as it is capable) *in the way wherein it ſhould go.* Nor ſhall you be herein more guilty of profanation and nouriſhing formality then *Timothies* Mother, and Grandmother were, who are commended for that practiſe in Scripture. But when you did catechize them, did you not teach them to *honour and obey their Parents in the Lord?*

ἀπὸ βρέφους.

Prov.22.6.

After. Yes, I did, out of the *fifth Commandement*, and *Eph.*6.2.

Pædo. You did well; but did you never take any ground from *Infant-Baptiſm*, to preſſe it upon them?

After. No, nor can I eaſily ſee how that could any way conduce thereunto. Do you conceive it doth?

Pædo. Yes, and that abundantly. For, if the *reaſon* which is contained in every duty, do render it the more due; then ſurely, the ſtronger the reaſon of any duty is, the more it is enforced thereby. Now, the duty of *honour*, that is, filial reverence and obedience, which the fifth Commandement requireth, is founded upon the reaſon of that natural relation which we have to Parents, as the Authours of our natural being, education, and livelihoods. And this is that which (as it is a duty of thankfulneſſe) the Law of God requires; (For as for that στοργὴ or *natural affection*, which is implanted in nature, that cannot properly be the ſubject of a Law, but is implanted by a kind of *inſtinct*, like that which is in other

Creatures, conveighed with their very beings, from the *ſire* or *dam* to their young ones.) Now, if the Relation that Children have to Parents, and the benefits which from them deſcend upon poſterity, be capable of degrees (as indeed they are, there being a vaſt difference (in this reſpect) between being born a Prince and a beggar) then ſurely; ſeeing the *reaſon* of commanded duty to Parents, depends upon the advantages which accrew by that *relation*; the greater thoſe advantages are, the ſtronger is the obligation to duty, which depends upon them. Whence it follows inevitably, that by how much *ſpiritual* priviledges exceed all *natural* priviledges, by ſo much doth the obligation of thankfulneſſe and duty ariſing from them, more ſtrongly emerge from the relation which we bear to thoſe, by whom they are derived to us. Wherefore (to conclude this point) it ſeems alſo undeniably to follow, that thoſe Parents to whom we owe a *derivation of Chriſtianity*, and a viſible *relation to God* (if (at leaſt) we judge theſe to be any priviledgs) are, in a more eminent manner, entituled unto the *duty* which they require from their Children, then otherwiſe they could be. And indeed not only *Reaſon*, but *Scripture* alſo affords ſufficient confirmation to this truth. For if the obedience of Children to Parents be by the Apoſtles Rule to be paid, ἐν κυρίῳ *in the Lord*, *Eph.* 6. 1. that is, *for the Lords ſake*, then (beyond all queſtion) it is moſt due to thoſe Parents, from whom that relation to the Lord, upon wch obedience is founded, is derived to them. And (if I be not groſly miſtaken) our principles (and

(and not thoſe of the *Anabaptiſts*) are the root whence this conſideration alſo ſprings.

After. Truly Sir, I thank you for this additional information, which I hope, I ſhall make a comfortable improvement of, and I do intend, by Gods help, not to deny my ſelf the advantage of laying ſuch an obligation upon my child any longer. The Lord ſet home this wholſom leſſon upon my children, and others, who I doubt, do not conſider of it as they ſhould. Only, becauſe the contrary practiſe of baptizing grown-perſons, ſeems more to promote the *duties of fellowſhip and communion with others*, I pray you (for a cloſe) that you will afford me ſome help in this particular alſo. For I find, that in the primitive times, Church-memberſhip was a matter of *choice*, not derived by parental right; and the reſtoring of this is urged by ſome, as the only way to reform Churches from the corruptions which ſeem inevitably to follow upon the baptizing of Infants; by means whereof ſo many ignorant & profane perſons go under the name of Chriſtians and make an unavoidably corrupt Church among us, as we have found by many years experience. Shew me therefore the uſe of Infant-baptiſm to *Church-Relations*, as well as *Family-Relations*.

Pædo. I ſhal moſt willingly ſatisfy your deſires in this particular alſo. Wherefore I muſt deſire you to cõſider

1. That in the primitive times, *Infants were not baptized* into Church-fellowſhip, is hard to determine from Scripture: nay it ſeems more probable to the contrary, ſeeing the Apoſtles baptized *Whole houſholds* frequently; and that there were no Children in all thoſe houſholds, inca-

incapable of making profeſſion of their faith, ſeems very improbable. I am ſure the perſons then admitted at years of diſcretion, were encouraged to baptiſm, upon the conſideration of an hereditary Covenant to their poſterity (which eſtabliſheth the ground of Infant-baptiſm) what elſe means the Apoſtle *Peter*, *Acts* 2. 39. to tell the Jews and Proſelites, that *the Covenant* belonged, not only *to them*, but alſo to *their children*?

2. But (to let that paſſe) I perſwade my ſelf, that the admiſſion of members to baptiſm, upon perſonal profeſſion, is a courſe more directly tending to the corruption of the Church, by unworthy members, then the contrary practice of admitting them *in infancy*. Upon a double reaſon.

1. Becauſe Infant-members (while ſuch) are the *pureſt part of mankinde*, being untainted with thoſe pollutions of actual ſin, of which riper years afford a more unhappy fertility in every ſociety under heaven.

2. Becauſe no Infant-member (as ſuch) is *capable of hypocriſie* (which frequently adheres to the ſpirits of very many of thoſe of riper years,) they being capable of being tempted to take up ſpiritual relations upon worldly advantages.

After. Yea, but afterwards Sir, they grow up, and though they have no Title to Religion, but *Tradition* and *Baptiſm*, and no more of it but a *bare empty form*; yea, though in their lives they contradict that very profeſſion into which they were admitted in infancy, and make afterwards; yet they challenge and enjoy communion with the Church

Church in your way, becauſe they are baptized perſons.

1. I anſwer, that though *to be baptized* (by our principles) give a *right* to all Ordinances of Communion, (wherein alſo we think we walk by the rule of the Scriptures, in which we no where read of any baptized perſon, except upon ſome juſt offence given, debarred from Church-Communion) yet we do not hold that it ſo gives a *right* to that Church-Communion in other Ordinances, but that any perſon giving occaſion of juſt ſcandal, may be (and by our conſtant practiſe is) excluded from them, till ſatisfaction given. *Pædo.*

2. And if formerly, and of late (in divers places which reformation hath not yet reached) there be inſtances to be given of ſuch *unworthy admiſſions*; yet, it is to be conſidered, that Infant-Baptiſm is no way chargeable with them. Seeing that if *Church-Officers* be alike careleſſe in the *Anabaptiſtical way*, (and they are ſo in divers places of this Nation) as ſome of our way, who give occaſion to this ſcandal, are; baptiſm at riper years, may open the doors of the Church to perſons every way as obnoxious, as any of our Members baptized in Infancy can be ſuppoſed to be.

3. The *true cauſe* therefore of thoſe corruptions in the *Churches of our way*, is, that there is no effectual courſe taken to *catechize* thoſe Children who are baptized, (whence proceed our ignorant members) nor power of Diſcipline and Government in our hands (for the moſt part to cenſure, and caſt out thoſe that are looſe and pro-

profane; whence proceeds the abundance of our *ſcandalous* Members. And let (as I have ſaid) the pureſt re-baptized Congregations be deprived of thoſe two means to continue them ſo; they will quickly grow (for all their baptiſm at years of diſcretion) as corrupt ſocieties as the worſt of ours now are. And ſome of them in divers places are ſo already.

And now (becauſe you have given me occaſion to take the practiſe of Infant-Baptiſm, as it relates to *Church-communion*, into conſideration) I ſhall in the laſt place ſhew you ſome hints, which may be taken from thence to advance the practiſe of *holineſſe in a political Relation*, which I before promiſed when I entered upon the uſe of it to Family-Relations, which I ſhall only handle in *Relation to the Church*, to which baptiſm mainly looks.

After. I remember your promiſe, and expect the performance of it at the ſame rate of ſatisfaction which (I bleſſe God) your former diſcourſe hath given me in abundance.

Pædo. I ſhall endeavour not to fail your expectation. Firſt therefore, the practiſe of Infant-baptiſm yields a ſanctified heart plentiful matter of *praiſe* to God for the *enlargement of the bounds of the Church* thereby, and the bleſſed *continuance of its ſucceſſion*, from one Generation to another.

1. As for the former of theſe: the *enlargement of the bounds of the Church viſible*, how much it conduceth thereunto to ſeal Infant-members by baptiſme, may be eaſily perceived; if we compare the *ſpreading of this leaven* over whole Nations this way, with the *ſlow and uncertain progreſſe*

progreſſe of it under the other, and adverſe way of Anabaptiſm; for where there is one man that takes up Chriſtianity (as far as to the Profeſſion of it) upon terms of *choyce*, we ſee an hundred engaged therein, by this way of obliging *them in Infancy*. Nay, and in relation to that very *choice*, we find by experience, that many perſons at years of diſcretion, are much ſwayed thereunto, by their receiving the badge of it in Infancy. For the farther illuſtration hereof, ſuppoſe an experiment to be made among the *native Indians in America*. Let the progreſſe of Religion among them be confined only to the converſion and profeſſion of grown-men and women, in *one part* of that wilderneſſe, of heatheniſm and barbariſme, and enlarged, *in another part* (equally populous) according to the Rules of Infant-Baptiſm, and the difference of viſible believers in one Age will eaſily appear on this hand by many thouſands. For my part, I conceive it morally impoſſible to rivet Chriſtian Religion into the *body* of any *Nation*, but by the way of Infant-Baptiſm. And if Chriſts command be to *diſciple Nations*, as it is, *Mat.* 28. 19. ſurely, (to me) it implies the practiſe of Infant-Baptiſm as the only way likely to effect it.

After. But, I pray Sir, what matter of praiſe to God for *enlargement of the Church*, can be juſtly gathered from the additions of ſuch numbers thereunto, the hundreth part whereof, are more Chriſtians by *chance* then by *choyce*. No *Prince* would think his Dominions much enlarged, by the acceſſion of millions of ſuch *Subjects*.

Pædo. Yes very much. For it is no ſmall matter, that

that an universal *face of Religion* is preserved in a Nation, though upon the Termes you speak of. For where all are (at least) professed Christians, under what obligation soever, there is lesse visible opposition against Christ and his wayes, then where the far *major part* are professed Heathens, or Turks, or Jews, or men of no Religion.

And the corruption of Religion would (in such an universal submission to the profession thereof) lesse be promoted, then in the confinement of it to some few persons amidst a generality of men otherwise engaged. As appears in those parts of the world where Christians live mixed with the far greater numbers of an adverse Religion. Suppose in Turkey, where it hath suffered very great corruptions in many main points thereof through those mixtures. And as to the instance you bring of a *Prince and his Subjects*; I answer, I doubt not but if the *King of France* had the whole *Kingdome of Spain* under such an Allegiance to him, as the whole *Nation of England* hath (by means of Infant-baptism) sworn to *Christ*, he would think himself more master of it, then to relinquish it upon easie termes: which may satisfie as to that point.

After. What farther say you to the *continuance of Religion*, through the succession of divers Generations?

Pædo. I say as much, that we may and are bound all to be thankful to God for deriving our Religion to this *present Generation* (and so may, except the adversaries principles and practise hinder it, *succeeding Generations*) by the means of Infant-Baptism. For surely (in all probability) had our

our *fore-fathers* left our *immediate Parents*, unbaptized in Infancy, and relinquiſhed them to chooſe their Religion till ripe years, it cannot be imagined, but that many thouſands of them would not have derived to their poſterity of this age ſo much as the Profeſſion of it: And if *our immediate Anceſtors* had dealt in the ſame manner with us, how many thouſands of us would at this day have been without any Religion at all, ſo much as in profeſſion and viſibility? And go downward to two or three ſucceeding Generations, upon the ſame principles; and how many ſoever may be ſuppoſed in our preſent age to be Chriſtians, yet by that time, the number of Chriſtians in this Nation would be like a *lodge in a Garden of Cucumbers*, *or like a few Grapes on the top of a Vine*, after the Divel and Heathenifme had gathered the full vintage. So that (how ſlight ſoever ſome men make of Infant-Baptiſm) I fear not to tell (even thoſe very perſons) that they *owe their Religion* to it; and they are very inconſiderate in their principles and practiſe (if only upon this account) that they *undermine* the very *foundation* of ſucceſſion thereof to ſucceeding ages.

Surely Sir, you do (by this diſcourſe) *call my ſins to remembrance.* For I have (I confeſſe) been very deficient in the ſenſe I ſhould have had of this mercy, both on mine own part, and on the part of the Nation in which I live. But what farther *uſes of communion* can you draw from Infant-Baptiſm. *After.*

An uſe of *charity and Church unity in the matter of admiſſion of Church-members*, the want where- *Pædo.*

whereof hath been the main occaſion of dividing this miſerable Church and Nation into ſo many *fractions* and *factions*, as pull it aſunder peece-meale at this day. For the principles of Infant-Baptiſm teach me, to look upon all ſuch perſons as are in Infancy admitted to baptiſm, as *actual Church-members*, till they do afterwards render themſelves incapable of that Relation, and are cut off by Church-cenſure. This is a peaceable principle; and ſtops the gap againſt the moſt perplexing queſtions concerning the admiſſion of members upon profeſſion of faith and repentance. For to ſay what I think in this caſe (without a deſign of occaſioning any new quarrels with any body) it ſeems clear to me, that in time of the Apoſtles, *profeſſion of Faith and Repentance was not required as an immediate qualification for Church-Memberſhip*: So that no one (to my beſt remembrance) was ever required to make ſuch a profeſſion to render him capable of admiſſion into any Church-fellowſhip, but they admitted all that were baptized, *eo nomine*, to all acts of Church-communion. So that ſuppoſing the right of Infants to baptiſm (without this profeſſion) as we do, the qualification for Church-memberſhip is therein ſuppoſed, and ſo no new one neceſſary to be enquired after, except upon ſome emergent occaſion any perſon ſo baptized, become juſtly obnoxious to farther enquiry in reference to admiſſion to, or ſuſpenſion from actual communion, though his Church-memberſhip in general be no way queſtioned. And this *reſerve* wil ſufficiently ſecure us againſt the danger of living in mixed communions by reaſon of this charity.

2. As

2. As also (secondly) an *use of Christian watchfulnesse over, and prayer* for such persons, who in Infancy are made fellow-members, (upon a Church-obligation) that they do not turn Apostates to their Membership. It is indeed (if duly considered) a *duty* incumbent upon the *whole Church and every member* to be responsible for the education, and regulation of the Children of those, who possibly may be too guilty of neglecting them themselves, or may die, and leave them Orphans. *These little ones are fellow-members with our selves, and so our care extends equally to them, as to others of riper age; yea, and more (in some respects) to them, then to others, because their tender age makes them more incapable of taking care for themselves.* Methinks it is a sad thing, that the children of Christian Parents should be left only to *the large charity* of those with whom they converse (as others of the world are) without any *peculiar obligation*, lying upon any, to take more care of them, then of the the Children of Turks or other Heathens. How much more conducing to their spiritual advantage is it, to make the whole Church their Guardians, and so make them part of the charge of the Officers appointed by Christ to watch over them, by bestowing upon thē the engaging relation of fellow-mēbers in that body, wch we do by our principles.

Yea, but I perswade my self, this is a thing which is very little considered by the generality of those who walk by those principles. For we see the children of such persons, as they own to be Church-members, are left as much to their own liberty, and as much thereby endangered, *After.*

as if the Church had no relation to them.

Pado. No, it is not altogether as you say. For the Church takes so much care of them, as to require a solemn *sponsion* on their behalf from the Parents, or Christian friends, or both, at their Baptism, that they shall be educated in the faith and fear of God; which is an evident demonstration, that this principle is universally received, *that baptized Infants are the Pupils or wards of the whole Church, and they their Guardians; and undertakers,* (whether Parents or Godfathers) *receive that trust by deputation from the Church, unto whose charge the Infants born within it do (as to their souls) principally belong.*

And if afterwards there be a defect of enquiry into the *discharge of this trust*, in the Church, or its Officers, and so their trust defeated, without any account taken thereof or remedy provided to relieve in such a case; that is the fault of those, who walk not up to their declared principles, & not the fault of the *principles* wch they profess to walk by.

And (lastly) the conscientious care of divers Ministers to catechize the Children of their Parishes; with the constitutions of the Church in former times, requiring all persons to present their Children thereunto (though of late for want of renewing that power, in the vacancy of Church-Government, sinfully neglected in many places) may sufficiently discharge many of us from such an imputation. And (I hope) for the future, some course will be by our Governors herein effectually taken, that whiles we generally retain, (by their countenance) the practise of Infant-baptism, the ends of it may not be lost through the

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negligence of Parents and Governours of Families, to preſent the Children under their charge to ſo neceſſary and uſeful an Ordinance, as *catechizing* them in the principles of Religion is; which the Lord grant.

After. I heartily joyn with you in this *prayer* and *hope*. And ſhall (God willing) as to mine own particular, practiſe accordingly; thanking God that he hath caſt me uuder ſuch a Paſtor, as will be conſcientiouſly careful of my Children, and encouraging you by thoſe Childrens attendance upon your inſtruction, which by my paternal power, I ſhall henceforward require them to do. Mean while, I profeſs my ſelf very much engaged to you for the pains you have taken in this diſcourſe to ſatifie me, in ſo important and momentous a doubt as this, and hope I ſhall continue ſteadfaſt and unſhaken in the retaining of ſo beneficial an Ordinance, to my lives end.

Pædo. The Lord give you ſtrength ſo to do. And for my part, I think this day very well imployed, in that I have (by Gods bleſſing) confirmed you therein. The Lord grant that others may, by the publication hereof, be in like manner, reduced to a *due eſteem* and *practical improvement of their Baptiſm in Infancy*, that they may not either *ignorantly* part with the practiſe, or *profanely* neglect the husbanding thereof to their ſpiritual advantage, as too many do.

FINIS.